

RENAISSANCE MASTERS

ROSE





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THE ART OF RAPHAEL, MICHELANGELO
LEONARDO DA VINCI, TITIAN
CORREGGIO, BOTTICELLI AND
RUBENS

BY
GEORGE B. ROSE

THIRD EDITION

TO WHICH IS ADDED A STUDY OF THE ART OF
CLAUDE LORRAINE

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DEDICATED

TO

MY WIFE

WHOSE INTELLIGENT SYMPATHY WITH MY STUDY

OF RENAISSANCE ART HAS BEEN A

GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT

PREFACE

IT is not the purpose of this book to endeavor to assist the successors of Morelli in determining the authenticity of pictures. It accepts the results of the latest criticism, and is based on a loving study of works whose genuineness is established by the weight of authority.

Its design is to give in a brief compass an insight into the essential characteristics of each of the masters treated, so that the traveller may be able to enjoy them for what they are, without looking for merits in one which can be found only in another. Even the greatest have their limitations, and these as well as their qualities must be understood to derive the fullest pleasure and profit from the contemplation of their achievements.

General students should form their conception of an artist from his acknowledged master-

pieces, which give the measure of his powers. I have therefore rarely considered doubtful or inferior productions, and have added no lists of the master's works. Many such lists exist already, and no two of them agree. I should, however, particularly recommend those appended to Mr. Bernhard Berenson's invaluable little books on the *Painters of the Italian Renaissance*. The extraordinary penetration displayed in the body of the text qualifies the author in an unusual degree to pass on questions of authenticity.

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are two periods in the history of the world's art that are of supreme interest, the age of Pericles and the Italian Renaissance. But they are widely different in their character. The age of Pericles was the culmination of a long and harmonious development, the glorious blossoming of a perfect flower, which had grown in symmetrical grace to bloom in ideal beauty.

Not so with the Renaissance. No period of humanity has been torn with more conflicting ideas, with more diverse aspirations, with more opposing passions. Greek literature and Greek art had come again to light, and the hearts of many, carried away by the loveliness of this

world, longed to return to the bright days of old when beauty was all in all, and men gathered to watch the naked runners at Olympia straining their forms of matchless grace and power, or stood upon the shore of the Athenian gulf to look at Phryne as she rose as Aphrodite from the purple sea. But in other breasts the religious fervor of the Middle Ages, the hatred of the pomp and glory of the earth, glowed as warmly as in the bosom of Peter the Hermit when he aroused Europe to throw itself upon Asia in the hope of recovering the Holy Sepulchre. What made the conflict so intense and so peculiar was that the new spirit did not come as a distinct faith against which the forces of conservatism could be clearly drawn. The lovers of antique art did not cease to be Christians, they were not even heretics, so that they could not be burned at the stake and an end made of the matter, as Simon de Montfort had wiped out in blood the brilliant civilization of Provence when a holy war had been proclaimed against the troubadours because they sang too sweetly of woman's love and of earthly beauty. The spirit of the

Renaissance penetrated into every heart, and the conflict went on in the bosom of every man. For long centuries men had bowed beneath the yoke of an ascetic discipline imposed by a religious fervor that had blinded them to the loveliness of nature, and had regarded the fair earth as a hideous dungeon haunted by evil spirits, the body as an unclean tenement of clay that imprisoned the soul and dragged it down to sin. Slowly their eyes were opened. They looked upon the world, and they saw that though defaced by the ravages of man and stained by his crimes, it was still fair and good, and in thier breasts there grew up, although they struggled against it, the old pagan love for the beauty of external things, for the purple sea breaking forever on the silver sands, for the sunlight's brilliance as it fell upon fields of golden grain and hills clothed in verdure; above all, for the beauty of the human countenance, for the grace of the human form. But these feelings were not simple and unmixed as in the bosom of a Greek. In every breast there were also the spiritual aspirations, the hatred of the world, the flesh, and

the devil that characterized the Middle Age. These inconsistent elements waged an incessant war. Sometimes, as in the case of Fra Angelico, the spiritual side had almost the entire victory; sometimes, as in the case of Titian, the new paganism almost uprooted the Christian spirit; and sometimes, as in the case of Raphael, they were blended together in harmonious union.

When the Renaissance began we cannot tell. Far back in the Dark Ages we can see the spirit stirring, now manifesting itself here, now there, but always sternly repressed by the bigotry of the time. But when at length the human intellect broke its fetters, its advance was extremely rapid. Petrarch was already seventeen years of age when Dante died, yet, while the spirit of Dante is almost entirely mediæval, the spirit of Petrarch is almost entirely classic. Still, as showing how the two spirits were intermingled, the very groundwork of Petrarch's poetry is of the Middle Age. One of the peculiarities of the Middle Age was its constant yearning for the unattainable. That which was within reach was without

value: that which was beyond the grasp was longed for with infinite desire. Men cared little for their own wives or for any whom they could win. Every knight chose some lady in whose honor he might achieve his feats of arms, every minnesinger or troubadour chose one to whom to address his songs of love and war; but it was always some one beyond their reach, either because she was the wife of another or because of her exalted rank. It was this purely spiritual love alone that found poetic expression; and there was so little reality in it, it was so entirely a matter of the imagination, that the real objects of human love cared little about it. His visionary passion for Beatrice did not prevent Dante from marrying and having ten children, and his good wife, Gemma, no doubt valued the poet's devotion to his shadow at its true worth. Had Beatrice come to Dante or Laura to Petrarch the poets would have wept over their shattered dream, and have chosen some other woman as the object of their adoration. This visionary love, which it is so hard for us now to realize, was the natural result of the absorption

of the Middle Age in the things of the spirit and its abhorrence of the things of the flesh.*

Though the Renaissance owed its awakening to the re-discovery of antiquity, there is a vast gulf between the art of Græce and that of Italy. In ancient art it was the type that was sought, each artist striving to produce the ideal of perfect beauty, free from the imperfections of any individual man or woman. With the soul, Greek art has little to do. The expression upon the faces is usually one of Olympian serenity alone, and if human passions are portrayed, as in the "Laocoön," it is only in their simplest form.

Far different was the Renaissance. Christianity and the Middle Ages had swept across men's lives, and they had learned to turn their glance inward, probing the soul's most hidden mysteries. Instead of faces which merely express the joy of living in a joyous world, in a world still bright with the freshness of its glorious youth, we have countenances in which

* Perhaps the best illustration of this peculiar kind of love is the Florentine poet Sacchetti, who married three successive wives, and in the meantime addressed all his poems to a fourth woman.

are depicted all the passions of humanity, its most secret instincts, its vaguest aspirations. It is no longer the type that is sought, it is the individual. Instead of trying to eliminate from the work of art all that is personal to the model, leaving only the abstraction of ideal beauty, the effort is to represent the individual person, the individual soul. Instead of endeavoring to produce from many imperfections a single perfect type, they strive to show how body differs from body, spirit from spirit. Leonardo da Vinci would follow all day long one whose countenance struck him as they passed upon the street, striving to penetrate the secret of personality, and to fix upon his sketch-book the charm of feature or expression with which he had been impressed—trying to seize those very elements of being that Apelles would have been most anxious to exclude.

Therefore, while the purpose of Greek art was the attainment of abstract perfection, the purpose of Renaissance art was the expression of the individual countenance and form. In this respect nearly all modern art has followed the guidance of the Renaissance, not of an-

tiquity. We admire ancient art, but its calm grandeur is no longer possible to our souls, torn as they are with conflicting feelings undreamed of by a Greek; and when we try to imitate it we are usually merely stiff and academic. But the people of the Italian Renaissance are our true ancestors. Their feelings were the same as ours, only more intense; they were confronted by the same problems; their art deals with the same sentiments, the same aspirations; and in the study of their works the modern artist will find infinite profit and inspiration.

The result of this seeking after individuality is that Renaissance art is far more varied than that of classic times. In Greece every artist was striving for the same thing, for the highest type of beauty or of strength, so that there is a certain sameness in their works. Scopas is more vehement, Praxiteles more voluptuous, but they are in search of the same ideals, and even among the ancients their works were hopelessly confused—a thing that could never happen in the case of Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo, Correggio, and Titian.

And it was in consequence of this love of individuality that painting became the favorite art of the Renaissance, as sculpture was the favorite art of Greece. Sculpture is best suited to the creation of ideal types, painting to the depicting of individual expression. And in the hands of the artists of the Renaissance the function of sculpture is completely changed. Instead of plastic forms with brows on which sits the serenity of Olympus, the body is used as a vehicle for the utterance of the most complex feelings; and often the artist thinks not of its beauty, but only of the expressiveness of the tortured limbs.

And this striving after individuality in art is but an expression of the spirit of the age. There are times in the world's history when the individual is completely absorbed in the mass of his fellows; when all men are seeking a single ideal, each rejoicing to subordinate himself to the spirit that animates the whole. Such in art were the Middle Ages, when myriads of men co-operated in the erection of those marvellous Gothic cathedrals which are the wonder of all succeeding generations, and

yet all were so absorbed in their work that we know not even the names of the architects from whose astounding brains could spring the conception of these vast structures with their infinite complications of ornament and slender shafts reaching heavenward their stony arms in rapturous prayer to the throne of grace—men who cared only for their work, and who did not even carve their names upon those pillars, the least of which would have made them immortal.

There are other times that are periods of disintegration, when the bonds that bound men together are loosened, and when each strikes out for himself, or combines with others only for purposes of temporary advantage, moved by no common impulse, but each seeking for himself pleasure, power, riches, or fame. Such a period was the Peloponnesian War, the fall of the Roman Republic, the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the Italian Renaissance, the Thirty Years' War, the French Revolution,—times of intense personal activity, of strong individual development, when the human soul breaks its fetters and revels in a

freedom that too often leads to dissolution and ruin. These are not the most wholesome periods in the world's records, but they are the periods of greatest interest. In them we pass from history to biography. We are no longer concerned with the movement of vast inert masses—we are fascinated by intense personalities, each of which differs from the other, having different ideas, different aspirations, different characteristics. And of all these periods of transition, when the old idols are crumbling and thousands of new ones are clamoring to take their places, when the old ties of association have been broken and new ones have not yet been established, when men are free to pursue the bent of their own spirit without constraint, when each stands distinct from the mass of humanity, the Italian Renaissance is the most attractive. It was a time of vehement activity, when brain and nerves and sinews were strained to the utmost, when each strove most passionately for himself, freeing himself most completely from his fellow-men,—a time of intense light and Cimmerian darkness, of great virtues and astounding

crimes, of princes like the Visconti, of whom it was said that their hate was fratricide and their love was incest; of popes like Sixtus IV. and Alexander Borgia, who defiled the chair of St. Peter with orgies that would have shocked the companions of Nero, and at whose poisoned banquets Death presided as master of the revels; of saints like Fra Angelico and Carlo Borromeo; of murderous Bacchantes like Lucretia Borgia, and of holy matrons like Vittoria Colonna,—a time of upheaval, of tumult, of confusion, when a mere *condottiere* like Sforza, selling his sword and his mercenaries to the highest bidder, could become a sovereign, when principalities were daily changed into republics and republics into principalities, when the ruler of to-day was the exile of to-morrow, only to return again in triumph to exact a bloody vengeance,—a time almost of anarchy, when men yet loved art and learning with an intensity of devotion that has never since been equalled, when the artist quietly painted his altar-piece or his Venus rising from the sea, or the scholar drank rapturously at the newly discovered fount of the Grecian

Muses while men were cutting each other's throats outside his door,—a time, in short, when a man could be anything if he only had the boldness, the cunning, or the strength. No age is so varied in its interest. Each city has its different architecture, its different art, and its individual history full of the storm and stress of conflicting passions. The very air seemed surcharged with electricity, here shining as a splendid beacon giving light to an admiring world, there crashing downward as a thunderbolt, bearing destruction in its wake. In this atmosphere, where all things were possible for good or evil, life was intense, passionate, voluptuous, cruel, as it has rarely been, and yet pervaded everywhere by a spirit of humanistic culture strangely at variance with the brutal ferocity that was continually breaking forth. The art of such an age must necessarily possess a peculiar and enduring interest.

There is nothing more striking than the sudden ending of Renaissance art. Greek art reached the zenith in the age of Pericles, but its long afternoon was almost as brilliant as its noonday splendor. But when the sun of

Italian art had reached its meridian it was suddenly eclipsed. This was partly due to exhaustion, but was principally the result of political causes.

While all this brilliant life was going on in Italy, while the peninsula was divided among a number of petty principalities maintaining the balance of power as carefully as the Europe of to-day, each the centre of a rich artistic activity, beyond the Alps, in those countries of the North and West of which the Italians rarely thought, and then only with contempt as a region of barbarism and darkness, forces were at work of which they scarcely reckoned. Slowly out of the anarchy and turmoil of the Middle Ages two great kingdoms were emerging, France and Spain—kingdoms that cared not for the arts, but rejoiced in war and rapine, before whose vast mail-clad armies the Italian mercenaries must be scattered as chaff before the wind. They rose above Italy like black and angry waves ready to break and overwhelm the land; but she saw not the danger, and went on with her masques and her revels, her painting and her sculpture, heedless of the

wrath to come. In an evil hour Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, invoked the assistance of the French. This brought the Spaniard also into the peninsula, and from that time forth havoc and desolation reigned supreme. Italy, where serious war had been for centuries unknown, became the battle-ground of Europe. The steel-clad knights of France, the iron infantry of Spain, the ruthless *reiters* of Germany, who dreamed only of blood and gold, and to whose rude natures art could make no appeal, marched back and forth, devastating the land and trampling upon the people until in the wretchedness of slavery they lost their genius and their manhood, and became as incapable of artistic production as Greece when she was reduced to the condition of a Roman province.

Moreover, Italy had returned toward classic times until it had become almost pagan, while the rest of Europe was still imbued with the spirit of the Middle Age. The pilgrims from the North, seeing the wealth, the luxury, the immorality of Italian life, in which the church took the lead, were shocked beyond measure;

and doubtless to the rude visitors from beyond the Alps many pictures which are now the glory of the world gave greater offense than the murders of the Borgias. Germany rose in revolt, and Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and England threw in their lot with her. Even in France the authority of the Pope was assailed. In this hour of the church's extreme peril, the fierce and bigoted Spaniards seized the helm, and fought out with measurable success the long battle against the forces of the Protestant revolt; and they trampled the bright Italian race under foot as cruelly as they had done the people of Mexico and Peru.

Crushed and bleeding, Italy thought no more of art, and under the tyranny of the Spanish Inquisition, she sank into such a state of degradation that not only was she unable to produce works worthy of her past, but she could not even appreciate those which she possessed, and covered many of them with hideous whitewash.

So perished the Italian Renaissance, but as long as man loves the beautiful and the grand

it will be studied with a loving care devoted to no other epoch of modern times. It has been to the modern world what Greece was to the ancient,—the glorious beacon at which the torches of civilization have been lit.

RAPHAEL

(1483-1520)

GENIUS has so often been synonymous with misfortune,—its path has so often led in despair and darkness over stones and brambles to a neglected tomb,—Life has so often pressed down upon its aching brows the crown of thorns, leaving Death to circle them with the wreath of laurel, that it is with peculiar pleasure that one contemplates Raphael's unvarying felicity. From his cradle to his grave Fortune smiled upon him, and the approbation with which his first artistic efforts were greeted increased with the progress of his years until it became a chorus of universal praise.

Most men who have enjoyed in fullest measure the admiration of their contemporaries are forgotten by posterity. Their popularity is due to the fact that they voice the peculiar

feelings of their own time, and when those feelings are forgotten, they, too, pass into oblivion, leaving the throne to some rival who speaks to the eternal and unchanging heart of man. But such was not Raphael's fate. In his own day he was hailed by common acclaim the Prince of Painters, and if a faint voice has since been raised here and there to contest his pre-eminence, it has been drowned in the general applause. His fame has grown with the passage of the centuries until it is co-extensive with civilization, and his name is pronounced with reverence in every land and on every sea. Nor is his renown confined to any class. There are painters, like Botticelli, who appeal chiefly to the learned. There are others, like Doré, whose hold is only upon the populace. But Raphael charms both alike. The connoisseur understands better the mystery of his power, but the peasant is enthralled with the beauty of his work. It may not be amiss to examine the foundations of this universal and enduring fame.

Our modern civilization is composed of two elements: the humanism, the love of beauty, of harmony, of rhythm, of proportion, of the

sweetness and the light of this world that we have borrowed from the Greeks; and the spiritual aspirations that we have inherited from the Hebrews. These forces are in large measure antagonistic. We all remember the Euphorion of Goethe, the beautiful boy born of Faust and Helena, the perfect being sprung from the marriage of the Middle Age and Antiquity, harmoniously blending in a single person the excellences of each. Goethe fancied that he saw Euphorion in Lord Byron, but he was surely mistaken, for Byron is totally deficient in that unclouded serenity which is the crowning perfection of Greek culture.

There has been but one Euphorion, and he was Raphael. In him alone are combined the noblest characteristics of the classic and the mediæval spirits. In him alone do we discover the spiritual fervor of the Hebrew so chastened and refined that it mingles in harmonious union with the rhythmic beauty of Grecian art. He is the crowning glory of the Renaissance. Since the great awakening the two forces had moved on side by side, often in hostility, sometimes blending imperfectly. To Raphael

was reserved the supreme honor of uniting them, of giving to Greek beauty the religious fervor and the sweetness of the Christian spirit in its pristine purity, of clothing the Hebraic abstractions in the radiant forms of Greece. He has done more than any other man to purify and elevate the conception of physical beauty and to make us comprehend the beauty of holiness. The world has never been the same since his inspired brush effected the magic combination. The two spirits which had been at conflict for ages he has reconciled with one another, and we know now, as those who preceded him could never know, that they can be blended without injury to either, and that from their union there can spring the dazzling Euphorion, as serenely beautiful as an Olympian divinity, as pure in spirit and as full of heavenward aspirations as the Marys who gazed in wonder into the vacant sepulchre. According to our individual temperament or culture, we may prefer the Hebraic or the classic spirit; but since Raphael has made the great reconciliation we can never again look upon them as incompatible.

One great element in Raphael's fame is his perfect purity. The soul of man was born to rise. It may flounder in the mire, but it will still strive with its soiled and broken pinions to beat upward into the pure ether, and though it may fall back into the slime from which it rose, the gaze of the dying eagle will still be fixed on the clear heavens where it might have soared on extended wing. Therefore the art that can combine a beauty that will allure with a purity that will lift the soul to a higher plane is the art that will last; and no painter combines these qualities in the same measure as does Raphael. There are some who have more spiritual fervor, but they are so indifferent to external beauty that they repel as much as they attract. There are others who have an equal, possibly a finer, conception of physical beauty, but they have not the same power to exalt the soul. It is impossible to look upon a masterpiece of Raphael's without a sense of spiritual elevation. He does not, like Michelangelo, carry us to dizzy heights around which rage the storms of Titanic passions; he leads us into an enchanted land bathed in a

mellow radiance, where all is as wholesome as it is charming, and where the Christian Graces move about upon their errands of love and mercy as fair as Olympian deities and with the sweet serenity of the world's youth. It matters not whether we are Christians or pagans, his works appeal to all; and we can never look upon them without carrying away with us some atom of their serene beauty which will make us aspire to a purer and a higher life.

Another cause of Raphael's success is his never failing humanity. In his works there is always to be found that touch of nature that makes all men kin. Michelangelo is super-human, and it is only the elect who can be in full sympathy with his mighty and solitary soul. Raphael deals indeed with a humanity that is perfected and lifted into a serener atmosphere than is possible for this troubled world, but even in his grandest flights he remains human. His men and women live on a higher plane than ours, but they are never beyond our comprehension or our sympathy. They are so elevated that they must be looked up to by the noblest, but they are never so far

away that the humblest cannot grasp their essential qualities. They are select spirits who have shaken off the dross of earth, but the beauty, the dignity, the sweetness of true manhood and womanhood remain. They are not supernatural beings, but men and women like ourselves, purified, elevated, and refined. The sight of the superhuman is dispiriting, for we know that we can never reach it. But the sight of the humanly perfect is encouraging, for it shows us an ideal that we can understand, and which does not seem beyond the possibility of achievement. Before Michelangelo's prodigious figures we feel a sense of our littleness and incapacity; but before Raphael's noble creations we feel exalted, and we say to ourselves, Why should not we be thus? In his power to combine the highest art with an unfailing spirit of humanity Raphael is supereminent.

One of the qualities which endear him most to the hearts of men is his cheerful serenity. Sometimes we enjoy the frenzied orgy of excessive mirth; sometimes we like to sup full of horrors; but both, in the healthy mind, are

transient tastes, while we gladly pass our lives in the contemplation of serene cheerfulness. Therefore Raphael's are pictures that we love to live with, that become dear companions of our solitude, lifting the troubled soul into a clearer and brighter atmosphere, purging it of baleful and unwholesome thoughts, bringing it to repose and peace; and as such they must always be inexpressibly dear to the human heart.

And it is to Raphael more than to anyone else that the modern world owes its conception of beauty—that beauty in which the physical and the spiritual shall mingle in ever varying proportions, but in which neither shall ever be entirely lacking; the beauty of the “Sistine Madonna,” whose great eyes are full of the light of heaven as she is revealed upon her cloudy throne; the beauty of the “Madonna of the Chair,” the ideal of wholesome and happy motherhood; the beauty of the young athlete worthy to have entered the Olympic games, who hangs from the wall in the “Burning of the Borgo”; the beauty of the Archangel Michael transfixing Satan with his lance,

unmoved by passion, as serene in the performance of his glorious duty as an Olympian divinity; the beauty of Apollo and the Muses thrilled with the rapture of divine harmony upon the wooded summit of Parnassus,—beauty in countless forms, never sensual and gross, never unsubstantial and inane, always truly physical and truly spiritual, always attractive and always ennobling. We do not know what our ideal of beauty would have been without Raphael, but it would have been different, either erring like Leonardo on the side of the spiritual, or like Titian on the side of the physical. It was Raphael who struck the golden mean and established our standard.

In no other painter have the real and the ideal so happily blended. He is upon principle an idealist, seeking to elevate human nature and to give it a surpassing beauty, dignity, and grace. But it is not the washed-out, intangible, unrealized idealism of which we see so much to-day. His figures, beautiful as they are, remain as real as the ugliest transcripts of low life given us by Van Ostade or Teniers. Even his fabulous monsters, his dragons and

chimeras, are not mere creatures of the imagination, but are filled with an intense, vehement, palpitating life, and we feel that if Nature had made such things she would have made them thus. And idealist as he is, he is perhaps the most absolute realist of all artists in the one branch where absolute realism is the highest merit,—the making of portraits. He anticipated Cromwell's injunction to paint him as he was, warts and all, and it is doubtful whether there are any portraits in the world more remorselessly realistic, more intensely individual, than those of Raphael. He neither flatters the physical aspect of the faces nor lends to them any of the charm of his own gracious personality; but with a pitiless precision almost without example he gives them to us exactly as they were, with all their imperfections on their heads.

Outside of the physical beauty and the spiritual elevation of his types, Raphael's highest qualities as an artist—those in which he remains unapproached and unapproachable—are in illustration and composition.

Art may be roughly divided into two great

elements, decoration and illustration: decoration, which seeks beauty alone, regardless of meaning; illustration, which seeks meaning alone, regardless of beauty. Ordinarily they are combined, so that the thing has both beauty and meaning, but they may be utterly divorced, as in the case of a crazy quilt, which has no meaning at all, yet which pleases by reason of the sensuous charm of color, and in the case of a newspaper woodcut showing some important event, which has no beauty, but which interests by reason of the occurrences portrayed. In art the decorative element is the universal, appealing to all times and to all nations; while the illustrative element is transitory, and when we lose interest in the events depicted we lose interest in the work as an illustration; and then if it still attracts, it must be solely on account of the decorative elements which it contains. But a vivid illustration of anything about which people are deeply concerned, as a terrible conflagration or a great battle that has just taken place, will interest the general public far more than any decorative picture, however beautiful, and will

bring to the artist a more immediate fame and a greater meed of popular applause. On the other hand, a mere illustration of something far away or almost forgotten will fall flat, however skilful may be its execution.

Raphael was the greatest illustrator that ever lived, and he has devoted his incomparable talents to the illustration of the book that interests us most, to depicting the events of the story in which we are all instructed at our mother's knee, whose every episode is familiar to every beholder, and which to most of us is full of absorbing interest; hence his vast popularity with all mankind.

If the time shall ever come when the Babe of Bethlehem shall be forgotten, when the meaning of the pictures is lost and men marvel vainly why angels should be attending an infant sleeping in a manger, then the decorative elements of Raphael's work will alone remain, and men may wonder why he was more esteemed than Titian; but as long as Christianity maintains its hold, the story which he illustrates with a sweetness, a dignity, a beauty that remain unrivalled will preserve its perennial at-

traction, and the popularity of his works will continue unimpaired.

It is the fashion now to depreciate the illustrative or literary element in painting even to the extent of denying it any place in true art. But this is an extreme view. The illustrations of the life of Christ can have no meaning for a Turk or a Japanese, who might still enjoy the splendor of Titian's coloring. But for a long time the civilized world has been brought up in the teachings of the Christian faith, and it is not likely that the Christian legends will be forgotten before the pictures themselves have crumbled into dust; and art can perform no greater service to humanity than to clothe the popular beliefs in noble and dignified forms calculated to exalt and purify the people's faith. Besides, it is doubtful whether illustration itself is inferior in artistic merit to decoration. The imaginative illustrator who enables us to realize vividly and intensely the events of the past or of the present, giving form and substance to our faint and fleeting impressions, so that we can feel the elevation and purity of soul of which humanity is capable, and can

raise our feeble imaginations to a comprehension of the grandeur and solemnity of great events, displays a talent that may well be paralleled with that of the most splendid masters of decorative art.

From what I have said of Raphaël's supremacy as an illustrator it must not be inferred that his works lack decorative qualities. As a colorist he is inferior to the great Venetians, but his color is always agreeable and appropriate, and the harmony of his lines is decorative in the highest degree. If their meaning were entirely lost, his pictures would still be extremely attractive for their mere sensuous beauty.

In the art of composition Raphael's pre-eminence has never been contested. In the grouping of the figures so as to form an agreeable and impressive whole he has no rival. It is not merely the balancing of group against group on a flat surface, which had been done so often and so admirably before him; it is the composition in space, the composition in three dimensions, in which he excels. No man, unless it be Claude Lorraine, gives so vivid an

idea of space. And most of his pictures give not merely the feeling of space, but of its limitless extent. He may not show a far-reaching background, but there is a sense of space stretching beyond and away into infinite distance. And this sense of space has much to do with the impressiveness of his work. We have all climbed to some eminence from which we have overlooked a wide expanse of country, and remember the thrill which we have experienced, the exaltation, the sense of enlarged vitality, the charm of the infinite that has stirred our souls. Something of this there is in Raphael's pictures. And his skill in grouping his figures is such that they remind us of the rhythmic harmony of music; not, like architecture, of music that is frozen, but of music that is throbbing and palpitating with life.

Nor is it necessary to go out of doors to experience the feeling of space. The same exhilarating sense comes upon us as we stand beneath the arches of a vast cathedral, in a lofty hall, or a lengthy corridor, and none of Raphael's pictures gives it more strongly than

the "School of Athens." To produce it is perhaps the highest achievement of architecture; to give the illusion of it is one of the greatest feats of painting.

Man's puny body can be accommodated in very restricted quarters, but his intellect pines for extended reaches, for limitless distances. A ceiling seven feet high will serve his every physical want, but unless it towers far above his head he experiences a sense of confinement, of suffocation. It is all a matter of the imagination, and therefore the same effect of exhilarating freedom can be produced by a picture so disposed as to give a feeling of the measureless extent of space.

As I have said, Claude Lorraine approached and perhaps equalled Raphael in his power of creating this illusion, but they work in widely different ways and to widely different ends. With Claude man is swallowed up in nature. He is but an atom in the illimitable expanse, and his puny figure might be stricken from the landscape without material loss. But with Raphael it is nature dominated by man. The sense of space is the same, but man is not a

mere incident, he is the master spirit. He is not there to adorn the landscape: the landscape exists for him, and, limitless as it is, it is subordinated to man's dignity. And it is this faculty, which Raphael possesses in so supreme a degree, of giving at the same time a realizing sense of nature's boundless extent and of man's inherent superiority, that imparts to Raphael's pictures a large portion of their unrivalled charm.

Raphael did not develop this faculty unaided. His master, Perugino, possessed it in a high degree, and taught it to his pupil, who surpassed him in this as in all else. And if, as many critics now contend, the "Apollo and Marsyas" of the Louvre, attributed to Raphael, and the "Baptism of Christ" in the National Gallery, attributed to Perugino, are by neither of those masters, there must have been at least one other who had almost equal skill in the difficult art of composing so as to reveal the depths of space while asserting man's pre-eminence.

Raphael was the most receptive artist that ever lived, learning something from everyone

with whom he came in contact; but he was never an eclectic. We are familiar with eclecticism in the next age, when the Carracci sought to produce pictures combining the merits of all schools. Their works exhibit great skill, and are sometimes very beautiful, but they lack vitality. With Raphael it was different. Everything he learned was so thoroughly assimilated that it became his own, and in passing through the alembic of his marvellous brain it was transmuted into purest gold.

This power of assimilation possessed by some geniuses is startling. Shakespeare's knowledge of antiquity was of the slightest, extending little beyond Plutarch's *Lives*; and yet he has given us in *Julius Cæsar* the most living transcript of ancient life and feeling to be found in the whole range of literature. The flashlight of his genius penetrated deeper into the spirit of antiquity than all the learned have reached, groping painfully with their farthing candles. So it was with Raphael. His life was so short and so busy that he could not have become a very profound scholar; yet the whole spirit of Greek poetry is in his

“Galatea,” the whole spirit of Greek philosophy is in his “School of Athens”; and while he became so thoroughly a Greek that his work would have been hailed by Pericles with delight, he still remained the highest and purest type of the Christian artist.

When he arrived at the zenith of his fame Raphael was so overwhelmed with commissions that Briareus himself would not have been able to meet the demands upon him, and the master had recourse to the assistance of his pupils, often furnishing only a sketch, and leaving to them the entire work of painting. For this he has been greatly blamed, but it was a priceless gain to art. His inexhaustible fertility enabled him to dash off these designs with extreme rapidity, and in the meantime he was himself working industriously with his brush. The patron who thought that he was getting a picture by Raphael’s own hand might have had cause to complain, but we should only be grateful. Without this collaboration we should have had few, if any, additional productions by Raphael himself, and we should have lost numerous treasures of ines-

timable value. Who would not have the "Holy Family of Francis the First," with that Madonna and that Magdalen which are among the most beautiful faces that even Raphael drew, and the magnificent "St. Michael" of the Louvre, perhaps the most glorious type of youthful manhood to be found in all the range of modern art, painted as they are by the hand of Giulio Romano, rather than not have them at all? Who would not have the "Battle of Constantine," perhaps the most splendid battle-piece ever produced, worked out after Raphael's death by his scholars according to his designs, rather than the uninspired compositions that they would have turned off if left to their own devices?

To realize the difference between Raphael and his pupils we need only to go to the Farnesina at Rome, and look at his "Galatea," the most beautiful of all the lovely pictures that have been inspired by the art of antiquity, so full of the sea's splendor and of the exultant spirit of pagan joy, and then pass into the adjoining enclosed loggia decorated by his pupils with the story of Cupid and Psyche after his

designs. Nothing could be more deliciously perfect than his own painting, while the work of his disciples offends the eye by its coarseness and haste. Still, through the imperfection of the workmanship there shines forth the divine beauty of Raphael's conception. The pictures would have been incomparably more precious had they been wrought by the master's own hand; but in that event we must have done without many a priceless masterpiece which we could afford to sacrifice even less than we could afford to dispense with this delightful specimen of mural decoration. Owing to the brevity of Raphael's life his works, without the assistance of his pupils, must have been comparatively few. Each would have been perfect, but we should have been deprived of many a marvel of composition, whose merits may be impaired, but not destroyed, by the inferiority of the workmanship.

Apart from the assistance received from his disciples Raphael was the most productive artist that ever lived. His early death limited his artistic activity to a period of twenty years, and yet he has filled the galleries of the world

with the most varied masterpieces. He was unceasingly industrious, but he must have had the most intensely creative imagination in history. Just as Michelangelo could see the statue in the marble, begging to be liberated, so he must have seen upon the naked canvas, as though projected by a magic lantern, the fair faces, the graceful forms, the appropriate attitudes that were to make up the picture, and beyond them those wide reaches of hill and meadow, always different and always lovely, that carry the glance away into illimitable space. He saw it all with the mind's eye as clearly as we see it now that he has given it tangible shape, and in the realization of it there was none of that doubt and hesitation which sometimes paralyzes even a supreme genius like Leonardo. He saw exactly what he wanted to paint, and the slender white fingers knew exactly how to paint it. The response of the hand to the mind was instantaneous and unfailing. He worked as a bird sings, from the fulness of an overflowing heart, spontaneously, without an effort, knowing precisely the note that he would strike. When he

thought of an occurrence it did not present itself to him in the vague and intangible way in which it appears to most of us. The whole scene rose up before him, not as it was in fact, but as it might have happened in a world purer, serener, more beautiful than this, and his magic pencil hastened to turn the vision into an everlasting reality. Where other artists fumble about, seeking the correct note, he caught it at once; where they hesitate, doubting the right path, he advanced blithely, seeing the end from the beginning and the flowery road leading to the goal. It was this wonderful capacity for mental images, this concord of all his faculties, that enabled him to produce so much and to do it all so well. The faculties of most of us are like the pieces of an orchestra playing each a different air; while his were all attuned together, each aiding the other in the production of the divine harmony that thrills our souls across the ages.

If you do not realize Raphael's greatness when you first see one of his masterpieces, do not despair. Few are they who do. The Titanic force of Michelangelo is more impressive,

Titian's voluptuous charms are more alluring, the haunting smile of Leonardo has a subtler fascination. But none of them grows upon one like Raphael. To appreciate him wholly we must slowly realize the vast variety of compositions in which he excelled. There are perhaps others who could have produced the delicious pagan beauty of the "Galatea," the noble dignity of the "School of Athens," the dramatic intensity of the "Expulsion of Heliodorus," the hurrying tumult of the "Battle of Constantine," the sweet, soul-stirring loveliness of any of his numerous Madonnas, or the agony of his "Entombment"; but who is there who could have produced them all, or other works so various in their character, so surpassing in their merit?

MICHELANGELO

(1477-1564)

IT is difficult to think of Raphael without also thinking of Michelangelo. Beside the beautiful countenance of the divine Umbrian there always rises the grim visage of the mighty Florentine. This is partly due to their rivalry in life, still more to the law of contrasts. Each stood upon a summit to which succeeding generations of artists have vainly sought to climb; but while Raphael's mountain rises in the clear ether bathed in sunshine and clothed in verdure, Michelangelo's is wrapped in clouds and beaten upon by the storms of Titanic passions. Which mountain is the higher we cannot say. Sometimes the verdurous summit seems to lift itself farther into the serene air; sometimes it appears dwarfed in the presence of the rugged sublimity of the other.

Time usually settles such questions of pre-eminence. We all remember Victor Hugo's fine poem telling of his search among the Pyrenees for the *Pic du Midi*. All the mountains seemed of the same height, but when he had given up the quest in despair, and was far advanced on his return journey to the North, he looked back, and behold, the *Pic du Midi* standing alone upon the horizon's verge. But time has not settled the contest between Michelangelo and Raphael. The men who saw them daily at their work were divided in their judgment as to which was the greater artist, and their descendants remain equally unable to agree.

Both devoted their best talents to the illustration of the Bible; but it was the Old Testament with its sternness and its God of Wrath that appealed to Michelangelo, while it was the New, with its sweetness and its God of Love, that attracted Raphael. Sometimes they invaded one another's province, but with moderate success. If Raphael had painted only the Bible pictures of the Loggie, or if Michelangelo had produced only his "Christ,"

his "Pietà," and his "Holy Family of the Tribune," they would have been esteemed capable artists and nothing more; but in their proper spheres each has remained without a rival.

There was never a more fervent Christian than Michelangelo, but there have been few who so utterly failed to grasp the Christian spirit of sweetness and light, patience and humility. Darkness and gloom, wrath and defiance, an exultation in physical and mental strength, a pride like that of Prometheus that would never bow though the eagle should rend his vitals through eternity—these are the sentiments that we read in his works. He tries to be a Christian, but his soul is with the Hebrew prophets. He was fit to stand beside Elijah as he stretched out his hands on Mount Carmel, cursing the followers of Baal; beside Isaiah as he hurled his maledictions upon Babylon the Great. He endeavors to represent Christian subjects, but all in vain. His Christ of Santa Maria sopra Minerva is an athlete rejoicing in his strength, who would have borne the cross to Golgotha with a smile;

not the Man of Sorrows whose fragile body sank beneath its weight. Change the head but a little, and it might stand beside the statues of the Olympic victors wrought by Myron and Polycletus. The Christ of the "Last Judgment" is not the gentle Saviour of Mankind welcoming the elect into the mansions that he has made ready to receive them; he is the God of Wrath of the Hebrew prophets embodied in a form of unexampled muscular development even exceeding that Torso of the Belvedere that Michelangelo admired so much. The master had been asked to restore the missing limbs to this headless trunk of unequalled power. This he was unwilling to attempt in the marble, but has sought to surpass it in his Christ, who resembles Apollo hurling the thunderbolts of Jove against the ascending Titans, but with an immeasurable strength and a vengeful implacability of which the Greeks had no conception. The "Pietà" of St. Peter's has been much and justly admired; but it is the physical beauty of the corpse of Christ, and the fidelity with which the limpness of death is depicted

that attract the attention, not the spiritual significance; nor can any trace of Christian spirit be found in the "Holy Family of the Tribune," while the naked youths in the background, which are perhaps the best part of the composition, are strangely out of keeping with the subject. These and his Madonnas in stone and his "Descent from the Cross" are precious masterpieces, but they do nothing to body forth in living shapes the Christian Gospel, and a pagan who should infer from them the genius of Christianity would fall into a singular misconception.

The spirit of antiquity, whether Assyrian or Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, or Roman, was always masculine. The feminine element, although ever present, was strictly subordinate. The virtues of antiquity were the manly virtues—courage, pride, independence, integrity, patriotism. It was these embodied in noble forms of perfect manhood that ancient art rejoiced to portray. But they easily degenerated into arrogance, revengefulness, and cruelty, and when they had done so, and beneath the tyranny of Tiberius the burden of the world's

anguish had become greater than it could bear, Christ arose to proclaim the superiority of the feminine virtues of love, gentleness, and humility, and to preach the brotherhood of man. Of the new gospel Raphael became the supreme exponent in art, but Michelangelo remained with the mighty men of old, the last and the greatest to assert the supremacy of the male element.

And he carried his preference for the masculine to the point of being abnormal, almost unnatural. He loved no woman unless the Platonic sentiment that he experienced for Vittoria Colonna in his old age could be called by such a name. His affection went out to his own sex, and when he emerged from his solitude peopled by stupendous phantoms, it was the society of men that he sought, particularly of young men distinguished for the beauty of their persons.

It is the fashion to admire indiscriminately all the works of a great man, and many laud the beauty of the women of Michelangelo. It is true that many of them are beautiful, but it is not the beauty of woman. The Eve of the

“ Creation ” has been much commended ; but in point of fact she is heavy and somewhat gross, a great Titaness sprung immediately from the bosom of Mother Earth. And how inferior she is to the glorious Adam in the adjoining fresco, receiving the spark of life from the outstretched finger of God. He likewise is a Titan, but he is one who, like Ixion, might aspire to the embraces of Juno. The “ Night ” and the “ Dawn ” of the Medici tombs are also of the Titan race, the one plunged in the dreamless sleep that follows the exhaustion of intolerable woe, the other waking from troubled slumbers to look in agony upon the hateful light of another day. They are very beautiful, but in their beauty there is no trace of feminine charm. It is the beauty of elemental creatures that Earth might have formed in her teeming womb when she was producing the great cave tiger and the mammoth. The lower limbs of the “ Night ” and of the Eve of the “ Temptation ” are surpassingly fine, but they have none of woman’s softness. Beneath the tightly drawn skin we see the iron muscles of a victor in the race-course at Olympia.

No man could love one of Michelangelo's women. They are not human. We can no more love them than we can love an elemental force. If the "Night" should shake off her slumber and sit upright upon her couch, if "Dawn" should rear herself erect, we should fly in terror from their superhuman strength and their unspeakable despair. Frankenstein's monster might claim them for his mates, but they could only inspire terror in our puny hearts. Even his Madonnas are not lovable. They are strong, vigorous women whom we admire, but who could stir no tender passion in our bosoms.

But on the other hand no artist among the moderns, perhaps none even among the ancients, has ever felt so keenly and expressed so well the beauty of manhood—of manhood in its highest perfection, strong in body, with every muscle developed to the utmost and capable of the intensest strain, powerful and undaunted in mind, ready for every conflict, for every danger. Look at the youths who adorn the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. They are beautiful, proud, and manly as the Apollo

Belvedere. They are not unhuman like his women. They are men as men should be, as we can imagine them to have been in the heroic days when Jason sought the Golden Fleece, when Theseus struggled with the Minotaur, and Hercules hunted the monsters in their lairs. If called to life they would win the love of woman and the admiration of man, and their beauty would be as conspicuous as their strength. And where will we find the beauty of youth combined with the pathos of despair as in the finer of the two "Captives" of the Louvre? The "Hermes of Olympia" is not more beautiful, the "Dying Alexander" is less pathetic; and the hopeless dejection of the bright young spirit now bound in fetters is revealed not merely in the lovely face but in every muscle of the perfect form.

But beautiful as are these adolescent figures, the essential of Michelangelo's art is overwhelming power, that *terribilità* which amazed all his contemporaries and continues to awe the world. There is no other artist who lifts the soul so high. In the presence of his superhuman shapes weighed down by thoughts too

great for mortal comprehension, bowed with a grief which tongue can never utter, or else defiantly erect like Ajax upon the storm-beaten rock, we feel that we are transported into another world peopled by mighty and terrible shadows, forms of supernatural sorrow, despair, and wrath, before whose vast elemental passions we quail as before some convulsion of nature. Look at his "Moses," and think what would happen if the giant, so instinct with life even in the marble, should arise and speak! How the multitudes would cower before him! What thunders, like those of Sinai, would roll from his mighty lips! We should think no more of resisting him than we should struggle with an earthquake. Before his overmastering will we could only bow in terror and submit. Imagine the "David" alive again, with that face that would defy a world in arms! Before his wrath a host of Goliaths would fly in consternation. Glorious in their strength as are the deities of Greece, we feel that if the war had been with Titans of this mould the battlements of Olympus would have been scaled and the *Götterdämmerung* would

have come ; and upon the ruins of Jove's palaces there would have sat the terrible Christ of the " Last Judgment " condemning the vanquished with an inexorable resolve. But such creations could not exist in Hellas.

Happy Greeks! The iron had not entered their soul, they had not bent beneath the burden of an unutterable despair, they had not striven to float among the stars on pinions that would not lift them even from the earth ; and they could have formed no conception of the ideas which Michelangelo sought to body forth in his stupendous shapes. The simple serenity and directness of their imagination is impossible to us. They belong to a different and a happier world. What they desire is clear and tangible. They are not haunted by impossible dreams, by vague and unutterable longings. Their art is the reflection of their own tranquil souls. It is immensely beautiful, but it makes to us no personal appeal. We admire it as we admire Homer, but it cannot thrill us like a line of Shakespeare, voicing our inmost thoughts, or a statue of Michelangelo. We feel no kinship with the Venus of Melos or the Apollo Belve-

dere. They are too far away, too alien to the ideas and feelings that stir us now. We cannot fathom the full meaning of Michelangelo's prodigious figures; but we feel that, Titanic as they are, they are still modern, and that they utter in superhuman tones the aspirations and the sorrows of living humanity; and they have a fascination for us that is never found even in the noblest works of Greece.

Artists who endeavor to express violent passions usually express nothing else. Their picture or their statue is only a symbol of the passion sought to be portrayed, of wrath or fear, of love or hate. We see at a glance the full message which they seek to utter. The figures are there to say a certain thing and they say it, well or ill. Understanding all that they would communicate, we lose interest, and return to them again only to admire the beauty of line or color. But Michelangelo's creations, like Shakespeare's, are real beings. We can no more read their inmost hearts than we can read the inmost hearts of living men; and their souls are vaster, more complex, than poor humanity can be. Their depths remain eter-

nally unsounded. We see the storms beating upon the surface, but we also understand that there are abysses which the eye can never reach. They are infinitely suggestive like the music of some mighty symphony. The more we see them the more their power grows upon us, the more unfathomable do we discover them to be.

No man so dominates the soul as Michelangelo. As Rogers says of the fearful brooding figure that sits upon the tomb of Lorenzo, meditating some frightful purpose of revenge and death, he "fascinates and is intolerable." In the presence of these awful shapes we feel as we have felt in some lofty mountain region with nothing around save stony desolation. Michelangelo is more terrible than Milton or than Wagner, for they comprehend the sweetness of love, the charm of womanhood, the rapture of exchanged caresses. They stroll at times through the vales of Paradise, but he wanders forever upon the mountains amid storms and darkness, or if he descends, it is with a poor grace "as if he scorned his spirit that could be moved to smile at anything."

But his mountain solitudes are peopled by glorious dreams such as he alone has dreamt.

Yet it is a mistake to speak of them as dreams. In the presence of his prodigious figures we feel that they are the reality, and that we are only shadows that flit before their face. As Venetian art was devoted to color and Umbrian to grace, Florentine art had been devoted to the realization of the human form. From Giotto down the Florentine masters had depicted figures that seemed more real than life. This power over the reality of things was inherited by Michelangelo, and applied to types of such stupendous energy, so instinct with passionate vitality, so colossal in their dimensions and so overwhelming in their power, that in their presence all else seems trivial and unsubstantial. Beneath the Sistine's vault there are noble pictures by illustrious masters, Perugino, Botticelli, and the like. But who deigns to look at them? In another place they would enthrall our attention, but beneath these overwhelming shapes, how unreal, how insipid they appear! Others have tried his terrible style, but have only succeeded

in producing spiritless giants, while his are imbued with an intense vehement life, and are worthy associates of those sons of God who forsook heaven to woo the daughters of men, only to brood despairingly over the loss of their celestial home.

How is it that he produces this effect? It is not merely his mighty soul, it is also his perfect knowledge. He alone knew all the capacities of the body as a vehicle of expression. Most artists are content to exhibit passions only in the face. He comprehended that every passion quivers in every muscle, and knew how to utter the full burden of the flesh. He was the first in modern times entirely to understand the importance of the nude—to see that in the successful depicting of the naked body so as to make every limb cry out the emotions of the soul, art attains its completest utterance. No man has ever comprehended the use of the unclothed form as he. With others we look to the countenance to see what the subject feels; with him we look to the torso and the limbs. Each sinew speaks and proclaims its tale of agony or joy. In ancient

art the body rarely expressed anything save the tranquillity of strength or beauty, or the harmony of rhythmical exertion. Michelangelo's contemporaries unveiled it only for purposes of study or to reveal its sensuous beauty. He alone used it as the vehicle for the utterance of all the passions of humanity, its love and hate, its rapture and despair.

He was born a sculptor, and a sculptor he remained, even when he wielded the brush. He was never a painter like Raphael. He had none of the power of composition of the Prince of Painters. When you see a picture by the latter the first thing that strikes you is the harmony of the design. It is only after you have looked at it in its entirety for a long time that it occurs to you to examine the details, and probably you will look at it for years charmed with the exquisite rhythm of the balancing lines without going further. But Michelangelo never pleases you in this way. His composition is rarely satisfactory, sometimes confused. You do not think of looking at his pictures as a whole. It is the individual figures that seize the eye and rivet the atten-

tion. How differently Raphael would have painted the "Last Judgment." Christ would have been a benignant and merciful judge, not an avenging god. Stress would have been laid rather upon the happiness of the blest than on the agony of the damned. The Virgin would not have crouched timid and unnoticed beside her Son. Above all, instead of a confused group of writhing shapes whose general purpose is scarcely intelligible after the most patient study, we should have had a composition comprehensible at a glance, and of such rhythmic harmony that we should probably never have thought to examine the details. But if we did, how weak the individual figures would have seemed compared with this crowd of writhing Titans trying to scale heaven and hurled back by the wrath divine! In Michelangelo's great fresco we rarely try to make out the general plan. Each figure attracts on its own account. Each is an amazing study in anatomical expression. Strong, passionate, wrathful, despairing, they struggle up or fall backward with superhuman force. And, paradoxical as the statement seems, perhaps the

finest of all his statues are those created by his brush; for these prodigious forms of the Sistine's vault and of the "Last Judgment" belong to statuary and not to painting. They could be transferred to the marble with no loss of effect. They are self-sufficing, they exist for themselves, and could be freed from the wall to which they are attached. They are not mere parts of a scene like the figures in a true picture. The sculptor has made them with his brush because he was so commanded, and because he did not have time to chisel them out in stone; but they are the works of a sculptor, and to statues they must be compared.

No artist was ever so wrapped up in man. For the beauties of nature Michelangelo seems to have cared nothing. The backgrounds of Raphael's pictures are frequently marvels of charming landscapes, and many of the most delightful scenes ever delineated are to be found in the pre-Raphaelite masters. But for all this Michelangelo had no eyes. His only interest was in the human form and in the feelings of humanity heightened to a supernatural degree and expressed with Titanic power. He

does not rejoice in peaceful prospects like Raphael; he does not dream of fantastic rocks like Leonardo; he does not even think of the desolate sublimity of mountain summits. Man is sufficient for him, and man's nude form suffices to utter all his message. Man is even the only ornament that he employs, and no one else has so fully understood the decorative qualities of the body. The grandest piece of decoration in the world is the Sistine's vault, and the only element that enters into it is the human figure, sometimes draped, generally unclothed.

No one, not even Michelangelo, can entirely escape the spirit of his time, and one reason why he exults so much in physical strength is that it was so highly esteemed by his contemporaries. The revival of Greek learning with the pride of the Greeks in the triumphs of physical vigor at the national games, added to the warlike instincts inherited from the Middle Ages, gave a great interest to all that concerned muscular development; and the inefficiency of the laws, the insecurity of life and property, the constant necessity of repelling assaults and the temptation to make them in

that troubled era gave to bodily force an importance far beyond anything that we can now conceive. Rarely has so much civilization been combined with so little protection of the law; rarely have men of such cultivation so often taken into their own hands the righting of their wrongs. It is but natural that the foremost sculptor of the age should portray the type which the age admired; but it is fortunate that he was a man of so lofty a soul that he could redeem from all grossness the enormous brute strength which he delighted to depict and make it the vehicle for the expression of the highest thoughts. By giving to his Titans a spirit even vaster than their bodies he has created a type of art that has remained unique, immeasurable, and overwhelming.

This exultation of Michelangelo in mere physical force, this joy in iron muscles ready for any strain, is most fully exhibited in that cartoon of the soldiers bathing in the Arno and surprised by the trumpet's blast, usually called the "Battle of Pisa." No such study in anatomy, no such picture of the male body in

fullest development, no such group of intensely hurrying athletes, with every nerve throbbing and palpitating with life, has been created in modern times, perhaps not even by the Greeks. Of its kind it is perfect. Exertion is carried exactly to the point that it should not overpass. There is none of that excess so perilously close to attitudinizing and contortion that disfigures the "Last Judgment." All is instinct with intense vitality, yet rhythmical and harmonious. Cellini and many of his contemporaries in an age so enamored of physical vigor regarded it as his masterpiece. It has perished now, and we can judge it only by the copies; but we know that their estimate must have been erroneous. Masterly as it was as an anatomical study, it could not have had that lofty spiritual meaning that gives to the gigantic shapes that adorn the Sistine's vault or brood above the Medicean tombs their everlasting interest. Yet it is not surprising that artists should have esteemed the cartoon so highly. They were no more capable than the rest of us of grasping the sense of those Titanic forms, or of reading the secrets of their troubled

souls; but the cartoon was a matchless school of design where all the secrets of the human frame stood openly revealed.

Michelangelo will always be more interesting than Raphael. The latter, like Tennyson, was only an artist. He lived in and for his art alone, and expressed himself completely in it. But with Michelangelo, great as was his work, we feel that the man was greater still. Lofty as is the dome of St. Peter's, terrible as is the "Moses," mournful as are the Medicean tombs, we feel that the soul of Michelangelo was loftier, more terrible, more mournful than them all. It is a rugged greatness, stern and unapproachable; but at heart he is kind and tender, filled with unspeakable pity for the miseries of man, with burning protest against his wrongs. Though beneath his touch the marble quivers with an elemental life, and on the barren wall there spring into being forms of supernatural power, we feel that much is still unuttered, that within that prodigious soul there are oceans of woe and whirlwinds of passion too great for brush or chisel to articulate. Raphael lived in an ideal world that was all his

own, serenely indifferent to the tempests that were raging round. With Michelangelo the Florentine patriotism and devotion to liberty rose even above his love for art. He was first a man and then an artist, and he was a part of the storm and stress of contemporary life.

If Raphael availed himself too freely of the labors of others, Michelangelo went to the opposite extreme of excluding reasonable co-operation. He wore himself out in rough-hewing the marble when a common stone-cutter could have done it as well; and therefore, considering the duration of a life prolonged to the ninetieth year and the robust health which he enjoyed, the amount of work that he has left, particularly in stone, seems limited, and very little of that has been finished in every part. Had he done like the modern sculptor, merely making a figure of clay and leaving to his workmen the task of turning it into a statue, his amazing energy and inexhaustible fertility would have enabled him to fill the world with masterpieces; but it is doubtful whether any of them would have had upon their brows the seal of supreme greatness,

whether all of them together would have been worth one of these astounding creations sprung entirely from that mighty hand and that tremendous brain. Still we can easily conceive how he could have availed himself to a greater degree of the services of others in doing the rough work of shaping his statues, and in that way have doubled his artistic production without a loss of power. But we must accept genius with its limitations. His solitariness was inseparable from his greatness. Like the lion, he stalked alone. His quarry would have been larger had he availed himself of the assistance of the jackals; but they were hateful in his sight, and he hunted by himself.

In our own days we have seen the art of music culminate in a genius worthy to stand beside Michelangelo, and have beheld his death followed by a decline like that which ensued when the mighty Florentine had passed away. A few years ago, when Wagner was pouring out his prodigious music-dramas, it was felt that at last the true dramatic music had been discovered, and that we should have a series of great operas of ever increasing power. He

died, and there fell a silence so profound that the slender flute of Mascagni resounded throughout the world.

So it was after the death of Michelangelo. Some artists went to the other extreme, like a relaxed bow, and painted pictures of sugared sweetness, which found a ready popularity; but the majority of the public, having become accustomed to the grandeur of Michelangelo's style, demanded that it should be continued; and many of the artists themselves, fascinated by its power and forgetting their own limitations, strove to imitate it. The pigmies, encumbered by the giant's armor, rattled painfully along, stumbling at every step. Where he was dramatic, they were theatrical; where he was vigorous, they were hysterical; where he was awful, they were grotesque, and the almost superhuman power of the master became one of the most potent influences in the decline of art.

In one respect Michelangelo was less fortunate than Wagner. He survived his generation, to sit alone like Marius upon the ruins of Carthage, brooding over the desolation and

shrouded in the gloom of the descending night. If Wagner has had no successors, he at least passed away surrounded by contemporaries worthy of his genius and with every reason to hope that music would take yet bolder flights; but the illustrious artists with whom Michelangelo had been associated preceded him to the tomb, and he lived to see art decline from Raphael to Giovanni Penni, from himself to Baccio Bandinelli, and to stand like some glorious mountain whose snowy summit still remains bathed in sunlight when the world all around lies wrapped in shadow.

Unhappily the progress of the decline is nowhere more plainly visible than in the works of Michelangelo himself.

At the outset of his career his efforts were directed to the attainment of an absolute mastery over the human body. By diligent study of the living model and continual dissection of the dead he acquired a proficiency in artistic anatomy that has never been paralleled, and which finds its supreme expression in the cartoon of the "Battle of Pisa." Nothing has ever surpassed the power and grace of these

hurrying athletes, whose movements are so varied, so rhythmic, and so natural.

But when he had reached this point he was not content, as almost any other artist would have been, to repeat himself. He sought still higher flights. No longer satisfied with the mere beauty and strength of the body, he determined to make it the vehicle for the expression of the deepest passions and the loftiest aspirations of humanity. A technical skill, a perfect knowledge, which others would have considered an end in themselves, were with him only the beginning, only a stepping-stone from which he might mount to higher things. It was in this period of his perfect development that he produced the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the "Moses," and the Medicean tombs, figures that are still almost, if not quite, as realistically true as the "Pisan Battle," but in which the soul utters the burden of its grandest thoughts.

But with the "Last Judgment" the decline begins. These prodigious figures, with their muscles like knotted ropes, their surprising attitudes, their amazing foreshortenings, are

still immensely powerful, but they pass the modesty of nature. The era of mannerism has set in—it is no longer nature that the master imitates, but himself, and his strength has become exaggeration. In the paintings of the Pauline Chapel the end has come—the divine fire has burnt out—nature has been forgotten, and mannerism alone remains.

Yet even now, when he has lost his empire over his own peculiar domain and the powers of the Titan seem exhausted, he invades another field, and, designing the dome of St. Peter's, so prodigious in its size, so harmonious in its proportions, so strong and yet so beautiful, he achieves the grandest triumph of modern architecture.

Ages have passed, but he still remains the greatest name in art. The Greeks have none to compare with him. Phidias was only a sculptor, Ictinus only an architect, Apelles only a painter. Michelangelo was a sculptor by profession, and with extreme reluctance did he take up the brush, but only to project upon the Sistine's vault the sublimest forms that painting has produced. With still greater

reluctance he took up the compass, but only to give the world the crowning glory of St. Peter's dome. As painter, architect, or sculptor he has had no superior, and in his supreme mastery of the three he stands unapproached and unapproachable.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

(1452-1519)

IN Venice a painter was usually only a painter, a sculptor only a sculptor; but in Florence it was customary for the same man to practice all the arts. Giotto was the foremost painter and architect of his day, and in sculpture he attained no mean distinction. And such was the case with many of his successors, until the school culminated in Michelangelo, who stood pre-eminent in all.

But of Florentine versatility Leonardo is the supreme expression. He embraced not only all the arts, but all the sciences. He was distinguished as a military and civil engineer, as a geologist, geographer, and astronomer; he re-discovered the principles of the lever and hydraulics; he was a great mathematician and machinist, an anatomist, a physiologist, and a

chemist. He invented more mechanical devices than any man that ever lived unless it be Edison, some of them merely wonderful toys that delighted or terrified his contemporaries, others serviceable implements that are still in use, like the saws employed to-day at the quarries of Carrara, or the hoisting apparatus with which the obelisks of London and New York were lifted into position. He designed breech-loading cannon, and demonstrated the advantages of conical bullets. He invented the camera-obscura and boats that ran with wheels, and foresaw that the latter could be propelled by steam. He planned the great works of engineering that have controlled the courses of the Arno and the Po, and put a stop to their destructive floods. Not content to walk upon the earth, he devoted much time to the contrivance of a flying-machine, studying the flight of birds, and trying to devise an instrument that could soar on extended wings above the mountains.

But it was in penetrating the secrets of Nature that he is most amazing. She who guards her secrets so carefully from us all, so

that we have to wrest them from her bit by bit, considering ourselves fortunate if after a lifetime of toil we have lifted but a little corner of the veil, welcomed him to her bosom with outstretched arms, and whispered into his ears her most hidden mysteries. He walked beside the sea, and he understood that the waters were composed of countless molecules. He watched the billows in their rhythmical advance, and he comprehended that light and sound moved onward in succeeding waves. He trod the mountain summits, and he knew that they had been the bottom of the ocean when the fossil shells had been deposited there, and that they had since been raised aloft. He looked into the heavens, and perceived that the world was not the centre of created things, forestalling the discovery of Copernicus; and he saw that the universe was held together by the attraction of gravitation. He gazed at the faintly illumined body of the new moon, and divined that it was the earth's reflection that lit it up. He loved all plants and animals, and comprehended their structure and their growth. He knew that the tides obeyed the moon, and

that the waters of the sea must rise highest at the equator. And long before Bacon was born he perceived the barrenness of the scholastic philosophy, and laid down the principles of inductive reasoning. And yet, though he saw deeper into Nature than any one man ever saw, it is doubtful whether he ever took the trouble to mention his discoveries to a human being, contenting himself to set them down in those note-books written in strange characters running from right to left, and which we are now only beginning to decipher, continually surprised by some unexpected flash of preternatural insight, and saddened to find that many a secret that we have since wrested from Nature with infinite toil was known to him and noted in his memoranda; while other notes which now seem obscure and incomprehensible are perhaps only revelations of a penetration transcending ours, and will one day be seen to foreshadow discoveries the most profound.

And yet science was only the diversion of his leisure hours. He was by profession an artist, inscribing himself as a Florentine painter, and practicing also architecture and sculpture,

poetry and music. The beauty of his person fascinated every beholder, while the charms of his eloquence enchanted every ear; and in addition to his multifold occupations he was an accomplished courtier, the best swordsman of his time, and the leader of the brilliant revels and pageants in which the age rejoiced.

It is not surprising that as a youth in Florence he was courted and admired as youth has never been since the days of Alcibiades, or that when he went to Milan he took the court by storm. As he appeared before the duke in the strength and beauty of his early manhood with his hair falling in luxurious ringlets below his waist, holding in his hand his wonderful lute that he had fashioned of silver in the likeness of a horse's head and from which he drew notes sweeter than living man had heard, improvising songs accompanied by music of his own composing, sung in tones of richest melody, it must have seemed to the assembled courtiers that the heavens had opened and that Apollo Citharædus was standing in their midst.

That a man of such varied occupations should have produced little in art is not sur-

prising; but that that little should be so perfect is astonishing, so rare is the combination of scientific and artistic genius, so difficult is it to look into the essence of things and yet be charmed with the beauty of their external forms. Yet there can be no doubt that among the countless works produced by that desire of beauty that dwells in every heart, none rank higher than the few that we owe to Leonardo's hand.

Modern criticism has done a great deal for the reputation of the masters. It has freed them from responsibility for many unworthy productions ascribed to them by the vanity and self-interest of successive owners. But in Leonardo's case the result is in the highest degree confusing. A few years ago the European galleries numbered many pictures conceded to his brush. The critics began their work of demolition, and there are no two whose lists agree; while of the numerous paintings once attributed to him only the cartoon of the Royal Academy, the "Mona Lisa" and the decaying fresco of the "Last Supper" are admitted by all to be authentic. His works

are the field where the modern criticism that has done so much for art is most vulnerable to the ridicule of its enemies. Still the doubt as to the genuineness of the paintings accredited to him does not greatly detract from their value as an insight into the character of his style. If not from his hand they are from craftsmen of his school, and in his genius their inspiration must be sought.

Fecundity is almost an essential element of greatness. It is scarcely possible for a single work, however perfect, to entitle its author to a seat among the mighty—witness Gray's *Elegy* and Poe's *Raven*; and it is doubtful whether any other man so deficient in fecundity as Leonardo was ever numbered with the greatest. Yet no voice has been lifted to dispute his rank among the master spirits of all time.

By what qualities has Leonardo been raised to this pre-eminence? To begin with, he was the first perfect painter among the moderns. Compared with him, his predecessors are all primitives. Between their art and his there yawns an immense chasm. They are striving with doubtful success to give tangible form to

simple ideas; he bodies forth with consummate power thoughts too subtle and profound for vocal utterance. Childlike and sincere, their vision ranges over a narrow field, and depicts imperfectly the things that it beholds; while his powerful mind grasps the most hidden secrets of Nature and of the human heart, and his wizard fingers transfer them to the canvas with unerring skill. They are still mediæval, while he is modern, belonging not to the past but to our own and all succeeding generations, one of those marvellous geniuses who outrun their time, like Omar Khayyam questioning the Deity among the blind followers of Mahomet, or like Shakespeare writing the soliloquies of Hamlet. In passing to his works from those of the most illustrious of his predecessors we perceive none of that gradual transition that we usually meet. Their art is an attempt—his the perfection of achievement. They are fascinating by their immaturity, he by the plenitude of his power. They are suggestive because we seek to realize what they were trying to express; he is infinitely more so because he represents more than our minds can seize.

Of all artists Giotto alone has so far outleaped the men who went before. In the singular letter which Leonardo wrote to the Duke of Milan in his youth he said, "In painting I can do what can be done as well as any man, be he who he may," and his boast stands as good now as on the day when it was made. The first of the great triumvirate of art in point of time, he remains the most modern in the spirit of his work. We feel that he was familiar with all the thoughts that haunt us now, perhaps with some that will only come to our remote descendants. He was the first modern artist in whom absolute technical skill and a great creative mind went hand in hand, and in neither respect has he ever been surpassed.

To Leonardo also must be accorded the supreme glory of being the first modern to invent grandeur of style. Before his day there were strong and beautiful pictures, but the "Last Supper" was the first that was truly grand. And it is the genuine grandeur which depends not on largeness of dimensions, but which arises from the harmonious combination of nobility and simplicity, and shines forth in

the smallest woodcut of the immortal work. Every line of the majestic composition, however reduced in size, is marked by a grandeur which was a revelation to his contemporaries, and for the like of which they had to return to the shattered marbles of Greece. The picture reminds one of Handel's music, which can be properly rendered only by a mighty organ or a full orchestra, and yet whose simple grandeur is apparent when it is played upon a flute. Its painting was like the discovery of some majestic harmony in nature of which men had never dreamed. In these thirteen figures seated at a table in a bare room with windows outlooking upon an extended prospect there is a dignity, an elevation, a majesty that came as an astonishment to the world; while in the varied yet harmonious arrangement of the several groups, the full capacities of composition were first disclosed. When the picture was completed it was hailed as the masterpiece of painting, and succeeding ages have but joined in the acclaim. From Uggione's great copy in the Royal Academy to the cheapest print that adorns the humblest cottage every reproduction of it con-

veys some impression of the grandeur of the original which, faded, repainted, and defaced, still charms us by the majesty of its shadowy outlines. If Leonardo had produced nothing else, his title to rank with the greatest could never be gainsaid. Grandeur of style is the highest merit that a work of art can possess, and of that supreme distinction he is the inventor. Had he never lived it might have been discovered by Michelangelo or Raphael; but who can say that without the "Last Supper" we should ever have had the "Creation of Man" or the "School of Athens"? Had Columbus never sailed upon the Western seas another might have planted his foot upon America's shores; but the glory of the discovery is justly his; and we cannot determine with certainty what Raphael and Michelangelo would have done had not Leonardo taught them how such miracles are wrought.

No man ever had such a mastery of facial expression. In portraying the human countenance he has the same undisputed supremacy that Michelangelo possesses in dealing with the human form. He looked quite through

the souls of men, and fixed them on his sketch-book or the canvas with unequalled skill. No expression is too violent or too grotesque to be depicted there, none too delicate or too evanescent. He understood the whole gamut of human feelings, the fiercest passions, the most fleeting sensations. His whole life was a study of the faces that he met, and the exquisite refinement and accuracy of his drawing enabled him to fasten forever the surging frenzy of the storm or the shade that passed over the face for a moment like the shadow of a summer cloud.

When occasion required, the meaning could be plain and comprehensible at a glance, as in the "Last Supper," where were to be seen all the manifestations of horror and amazement exhibited by strong men as Christ uttered the words, "One of you shall betray me." In the "Battle of Anghiari," or the "Battle of the Standard," as it is commonly called, the first great battle piece of modern times, we have every aspect of rage and fury of which the countenance of man or beast was ever capable.

Nowhere can we better contrast Leonardo,

Michelangelo, and Raphael than in their three great battle pieces. In Raphael's "Battle of Constantine" we are attracted by the harmony and rhythm of the contending masses, the beauty of the composition, the pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war. In Michelangelo's "Battle of Pisa" it is the muscular development of the hurrying athletes. But with Leonardo it is the psychological interest—the unspeakable rage of the struggling soldiers. His ancestors had known nothing of real war. The contests of the Italian mercenaries were little more than jousts and tournaments, where fatalities were rare. But in his day the French, Germans, and Spaniards had made Italy the battle-ground of Europe, and had shown its inhabitants how war was carried on by the barbarians across the Alps. Leonardo beheld it, and it seemed to him, in his own words, a most bestial frenzy. As such he has depicted it, and beside his masterpiece all other representations of the rage of battle are weak and tame. The insane fury, the fiendish hunger for blood that has changed the combatants into wild beasts having only the outward

semblance of humanity extends even to the horses, which fight savagely, tearing each other with their teeth with all the ferocity of tigers. There is nothing glorious here—all is fierce, realistic, horrible, the truest, strongest, most merciless picture of the human brute ravening for slaughter that has ever been drawn. In Raphael's painting we see war as it looks to the leaders from afar; in Michelangelo's, war as it appears to the soldiers preparing for the conflict; while Leonardo gives us war as it is in fact, in all its nameless horror.

Leonardo's cartoon, like Michelangelo's, has disappeared, and we know it only by the copies; but in his *Treatise on Painting* he gives us the best description of the appearance of a battle that has ever been penned, and as we know that he had the power to body forth every vision of his teeming brain, we have no reason to doubt that all the smoke and dust, the confusion, the frenzy and despair of which he speaks were to be seen in this cartoon. Even as it has come down to us it stands unrivalled as a representation of war in its psychological significance.

But while Leonardo thus excelled all others in depicting the violent passions of men, he delighted most in delineating faces of a charm so delicate and subtle that they remain as fathomless as those Alpine lakes whose smiling surface conceals abysmal depths. Upon most of them there is that strange smile extending no further than the lips which he inherited from his master Verrocchio, but which beneath his magic touch changed from a pleasing smirk to a thing of profound and fascinating mystery.

It is seen in its perfection on the lips of the "Mona Lisa," that marvellous portrait which Francis I. purchased at a price then almost unheard of, and whose riddle succeeding generations have striven in vain to read. In the Louvre she is still sitting, and every passer is constrained to stop, lured by that smile as by a siren's song, vainly demanding why she smiles and with what intent. Has she exhausted all the possibilities of pain and joy; has she wandered through the streets of Sodom and by the waters of Damascus; has she hung her harp upon the willows of Babylon; has she danced with Messalina and supped with Nero;

and does she smile to behold our innocence ? Has she sat with Apollo beside the Castalian stream, and is she still listening to the Muses' song ? Is she thinking of her liege lord Giocondo, or dreaming of some guilty love ? Is it good or evil that is in those haunting eyes and on those smiling lips ? Perhaps Walter Pater, whose peculiar and super-refined genius brings him very close to Leonardo, has best divined her meaning :

“ The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters, is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand years man had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all ‘ the ends of the world are come,’ and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty into which the soul with all its maladies has passed ? All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in

that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands." *

Many others have sought to read her riddle, but she remains the most insoluble of mysteries, and pursues us with a haunting power possessed by no other work save perhaps the "Melancholia" of Albert Dürer.

And this same charm is in the faces of all

* *The Renaissance*, p. 134.

his women, in those Madonnas which are so fascinating as revelations of subtlest womanhood, and in his countless sketches of female heads. No man has ever penetrated so deeply into woman's heart, none has ever felt so strongly the enchantment of the eternal womanly, or transferred it to canvas with such consummate skill.

He is not a lover of physical beauty. His types, if robbed of the charm of expression that transfigures them, would rarely be beautiful at all. His is a beauty that works from within outward, which existed in the soul before it manifested itself in the face. Take it away, and the features attract no more—sometimes they would be merely commonplace, more frequently they would be simply strange.

It is not all beauty that is suited to artistic treatment. Many exquisitely beautiful women are fit only for the adornment of a fashion plate—they lack that nameless distinction which a picture must possess to be classed as art. This fashion-plate beauty made no appeal to Leonardo. He did not even value it at its worth. The only beauty that he cared for was the

purely artistic beauty, beauty so thoroughly artistic that only the elect can realize the full extent of its subtle fascination.

It is everywhere in Leonardo's genuine work, in the "Mona Lisa," in the Academy cartoon, in the "Madonna of the Rocks" of the National Gallery, in "La Vièrge aux Rochers" and the "St. Anne" of the Louvre. Deprived of the refined, sensitive soul that shines through their eyes and quivers on their lips they would be plain enough; but he who is insensible to their enthralling magic may well despair of ever comprehending art in its most exquisite manifestations.

Leonardo's figures are the most spiritual that have ever been drawn. Beside them Michelangelo's are only athletes, Raphael's only innocents upon whose unstained brows sorrow and sin and love and hate have set no mark. Leonardo's have lived this life and drunk its cup of joy and anguish to the lees—lived it with minds intensely active and nerves vibrating to passion's every thrill, and it is with their souls that they have lived—souls that have trembled with rapture and quivered

with pain, and which have learned the lesson that their lives could teach. But they are not spiritual in the sense of religious. He was not a saintly man, and Vasari says in his first edition, probably not without reason, that he was an unbeliever. But in humanity it was the spiritual essence that concerned him and not the fleshly envelope.

Of all artists he was the greatest anatomist, unless it be Michelangelo. But how differently they studied and for what different ends! Michelangelo studied anatomy only to see what he could do with the human frame as a means of artistic expression. Leonardo investigated it as a scientific fact, and competent judges declare that his anatomical drawings are the most accurate that have ever been made. Michelangelo loved the body, and rejoiced to portray its strength and beauty. Leonardo painted no nude figure save the "Leda," which has disappeared, and even there it was the expression of the face that struck the beholder, not the beauty of the form; and his sketches and drawings of the nude are hasty and defective. It was in the face that his art

was centred, in the representation of the soul shining through mortal lineaments. Perhaps no one was ever so exclusively a painter of the soul.

And as usual, exclusive devotion met with its reward. He caught the soul in the moments when it seems most hidden to mortal sight, when it was listening to the music of the spheres, when it was wandering among dreams of unspeakable raptures and impossible sins, when it strayed with the women of Gomorrah or sat by the waters of Lethe.

No man ever painted faces of such subtle charm or of so unsearchable a meaning; and as we stand before them we are impelled to inquire whether they were mysteries also to him, or whether those penetrating eyes of his which saw so deeply into Nature's secrets could also read their strange enigmas. To us they remain as inscrutable as they are fascinating; and because their riddle remains unread they haunt us yet with their inscrutable smile.

There are no women whom men could love like Leonardo's, and none perchance whose love would be so dangerous. Age could not

wither them, nor custom stale their infinite variety. Their empire would not be based upon the passing attractions of the flesh, but upon all that is subtle and alluring in the soul of woman. With the witchery of their smile they could change their lovers into brutes or lift them into heroes. They would be forever new because the shadowy depths of their being could never be sounded, and leaden-eyed Satiety would not wait upon their multiform caresses. They might be the sirens, the lamias, the vampires of old; they might be Laïs or Cleopatra; to their subtle genius all things would be possible, and the man who fell beneath the magic of their spell would find release in death alone. When his soul was once caught in the witchery of that mysterious smile or in the shining meshes of those locks waving in uncontrolled luxuriance or bound in intricate braids above the arching brows, it might struggle as a butterfly in the web, but never could it burst its bonds.

But it was not alone in the grandeur of his style or in his unequalled capacity to delineate the varying expressions of the human counte-

nance that Leonardo advanced beyond his predecessors ; no man has ever made greater changes in the technic of painting. Before his day men were content with line and color as the means of artistic utterance. He was the first to perceive that light and shade were equally important, and were capable of producing the most poetical and illusive effects. He did not invent *chiaroscuro*, but he was the first to handle it as a master. In his pictures lights and shadows are treated with all the truth of nature, and they are full of bewitching loveliness, of mystery and charm. His *chiaroscuro* is not brilliant like Correggio's, it is not full of luminous splendor like that of Rembrandt ; but it is deep and true. He experimented much with pigments, and as the effect of time upon them could only be determined with the lapse of years, he fell into errors never sufficiently to be deplored, which have lost for us the " Last Supper " and the portion of the " Battle of the Standard " that was executed upon the wall, and whose effects are only too visible in all his works. To deepen his shadows he painted upon a sombre groundwork, and

the pigment of this having come through, it has darkened all his pictures. The wonderful flesh tints of the "Mona Lisa" which filled Vasari with admiration have disappeared, and it is only with difficulty that we can distinguish the fantastic rocks and meandering streams that fill the background. To convince ourselves that this darkening is not essential to the most perfect light and shade we need only turn to the other wall of the Salon Carré on which hangs Correggio's "Jupiter and Antiope," still as bright as on the day when it left the painter's hand. But as Raphael and Michelangelo learned from Leonardo the grandeur of their style, so Correggio owes to him the bewitching charm of his *chiaroscuro*.

Some complain of Leonardo that he enticed men from the pleasant paths of primitive art so that after him it was impossible to paint with the old simple directness. The observation is just, but the reproach unfounded. No work can combine every merit, and every gain implies a corresponding loss. There can be no increase of power without some loss of delicacy, and what we gain in depth we lose in

simplicity. A man who innovated so much as Leonardo, who converted the works of his predecessors into relics of the past, and lifted art to a higher and a broader plane, necessarily bore it away from many a sweet dell where at times we still delight to linger; but his services were none the less conspicuous. He did nothing to degrade art; he only exalted it to a perfection where certain charming qualities of the delicious primitives became impossible; and if their pictures grow brighter and mellow with time while his have steadily darkened, that is due to the accidental use of unsatisfactory pigments and to the absence in their works of those delicate gradations of light and shade so essential to artistic truth.

Nature never loved a son as she loved Leonardo, and to none other has she opened her bosom with such unreserve. And he returned her love with an equal devotion. She was his sole monitor, his only example. To her he went in all his perplexities; from her he gathered every truth. While his contemporaries were all powerfully affected by the remains of antique art, for him it did not exist.

Only once in his *Treatise on Painting* does he mention the Greeks and Romans, and then not as objects of artistic imitation. The plastic beauty of form and feature that they admired meant nothing for him; the mysterious beauty of the soul for which he sought would have been incomprehensible to them. Amidst the countless faces that his sketch-books have preserved there is perhaps not one of classic purity of outline. Neither are they mediæval, like Botticelli's. They are modern—or, rather, they belong to all ages where the soul of man suffers and pants and yearns and is rejoiced.

But though Leonardo turns so persistently to Nature, he was not a realist. He was never content with commonplace ugliness. He sought to penetrate Nature's remotest confines and pluck the rarest and most delicate flowers that blossom there unseen by common eyes. He was a seeker after things that are beautiful and exotic, the exquisite orchids, fed by the air and the dew, that bloom in life's tangled garden. It is Nature that attracts him, but it is Nature in her most refined and subtlest revelations.

His devotion to Nature is apparent not only in his studies of the human countenance, but in his treatment of every leaf and flower. He paints them with a skill, a tenderness, an accuracy, which reveal not merely his botanical knowledge, but his affection. He loved all living things, and he would spend large sums in buying birds that he might open their cages and watch them fly away. In his long study for Sforza's statue he acquired the most thorough comprehension of the anatomy and movements of the horse that any man has ever possessed, and he was so attached to his horses that in the moments of his greatest adversity nothing could induce him to part with them. His fondness extended even to inanimate nature, particularly when it manifested itself in unusual forms; and he paints his fantastic rocks with the same care as his Madonna's smile.

One of the things that he loved most was human hair. His own was the admiration of his contemporaries, and he loved hair in all its multifold shapes and varying colors, and painted it with an unequalled patience of de-

tail, so that each gleaming thread is distinctly seen. It appears to fascinate him, and he represents it in every conceivable way, now freely flowing, now arranged in intricate designs of marvellous conception.

And to the same love of Nature we owe that interest in all things strange and curious that seems to have been the strongest passion of his life. Rare plants and flowers, singular animals,—above all, fantastic rocks such as haunt the dreams of poets, and unusual faces, having in them something extraordinary, whether of ugliness or beauty, had for him a resistless charm. Insects and reptiles of the most hideous aspect, countenances the most grotesque and repulsive, allured him as much as forms of benignity and grace. He would gather rude peasants about him and excite them to laughter by unseemly jests that he might fix upon his note-book their bestial mirth. He would stand beside the dying criminal, and watch him writhing in the agony of the execution; or he would follow a crippled beggar that he might preserve the record of his deformity. All that was abnormal, all that was strange and

curious, had for him an attraction in no way dependent on its inherent worth.

His fondness for strange things is also manifested in that fashion of writing from right to left, which makes his manuscripts so difficult to decipher that a great part of them still retain their secrets. Some writers have accounted for it by those wanderings through the East which his papers seem to put beyond question, though Vasari knew nothing of them; but many have travelled there without that result. Others, again, explain it by the fact that he was left-handed; but the world is full of left-handed men who still write in the normal manner. It could only have been a part of that seeking after strange things that was an essential element of his genius.

Was it this same love of Nature that caused him to paint St. John as a smiling faun such as thronged the forests when Greece was young? A face closer to Nature in her smiling moods it would be difficult to find. He is one of the joyous children of universal Pan, such a face as we should look to see peering out of the thicket in spring when a bird is singing on

every bough and every bramble is a mass of flowers. He is not the pale anchorite of the desert, the voice crying in the wilderness. He is not even Christian. By a kinship of soul, by the same love for the beauty of woodland nature, Leonardo has returned unconsciously to the early pagan spirit, and has created a type which is perhaps the most profoundly pagan of any that we possess; and the pupil who has taken the same conception, crowned it with vine-leaves and converted it into the beautiful "Bacchus" that sits in the Louvre beside the "St. John" had a truer sense of the character of the work.

Leonardo is the most thoughtful of all painters unless it be Albert Dürer. The mind and its infinite suggestions are his realm. With Raphael it is beauty and harmony, with Michelangelo it is passion and strength, with him it is thought and feeling—thought so deep that voice can never utter it, feelings so sensitively delicate, so preternaturally refined that they elude our grasp; and he is full of all sorts of curious questionings, of intricate caprices mingled with sublime conceptions. No

mind of power so versatile and penetrating was ever devoted to artistic effort. The time that he spent in scientific investigation has been regretted, but it was not lost, even to art. Had he been less intent to know the hidden mystery of things he might have produced more; but would it have been worth the smile of the "Mona Lisa" or the faces of the Academy cartoon? The world is full of commonplace painters whose production is unlimited; is it not better to have the few masterpieces of Leonardo, full of subtle witchery drawn from the inmost heart of nature and of man, than all their shallow works? We must accept him as he is. His mind was too vast, too subtle, for him to be a largely creative artist. He saw too deeply into the essence of things to be content with facile hand to depict their surfaces. His visions were so beautiful that he despaired of giving them tangible shapes, and preferred to leave them in the realm of dreams. Perhaps he cared not to bring them forth to public view, just as he was content with merely jotting down in his notebook discoveries which we have since remade

with infinite toil. Perhaps he wished to do more than art could, and so accomplished less than it might. But the little that we possess gives us a deeper insight into nature and the human heart than we should otherwise have had, and is as precious as it is rare. Had he not been so curious of other things he would have painted more, but he could not have painted as he did.

Of Leonardo we have only one authentic portrait, a powerful drawing in red chalk by his own hand, representing himself in his old age, and it is the saddest portrait that was ever made. It is a strong face with beetling brows and piercing eyes, but its expression is one of bitterest disenchantment. He is the man to whom Nature had opened her bosom as to no other that ever lived, who read as in an open book the most hidden secrets of the human heart, and the only result is an inexpressible bitterness, an unutterable scorn for man and perhaps for Nature. With all his Herculean strength, he died of exhaustion at sixty-seven, an age at which Michelangelo and Titian were in their prime, and we can

imagine him upon his death-bed muttering to himself, "Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity. He who increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow."

TITIAN

(1477-1576)

IN Titian the Renaissance culminates. The revolt against the Middle Ages, which began timidly with Niccolò Pisano, achieved in him its completest triumph. Raphael compromised with the past, and fused the mediæval and classic conceptions into a new ideal of everlasting beauty. Rejecting the mediæval spirit, Titian, although he painted some of the noblest of religious pictures, was essentially a pagan, with all a Greek's joy in the dignity of man, the beauty of woman, and the charm of nature; loving them for what they are, and with no vain aspirations toward a higher spiritual life. Most of the Renaissance masters are still struggling with the Middle Age, endeavoring with only partial success to escape from the prison in which it has confined their souls. Titian

has conquered his freedom, or rather was born free, and if the Middle Age exists for him at all, it is only as a hideous nightmare which he has almost forgotten in the golden sunshine of a perfect day. Life, which to the mediæval conception was only a gloomy portal leading to death and judgment, is to him a thing of infinite beauty, dignity, and health.

We are only now recovering the position to which Titian had attained. The Protestant Reformation, followed by the Catholic Reaction, the Spanish Inquisition, and the religious wars, swept away the bright spirit of youthful joy and freedom which thrilled the men of the Italian Renaissance, and plunged the world into a darkness almost as black and even bloodier and more hideous than the night of the Middle Ages. This terrible tempest of bigotry and wrath has thundered past us, and for two hundred years the clouds that it left behind have been drifting slowly by, so that at length we can again look at the world with Titian's eyes, rejoicing in its life and beauty, though rather with the saddened gaze of his

later years than with the idyllic freshness of his early prime.

In his broad sanity, his masterful serenity, his perfect control of the resources of his art, he reminds us of Goethe in his Olympian days at Weimar; but unlike Goethe he had no Gothic period, no season of storm and stress. From the time when he came to Venice, looking with the wonder of a mountain lad on the dazzling splendor of the Ocean's Queen, until in his hundredth year he laid down his brush at the summons of the plague, he is ever the same, with an unchanging sense of the dignity of life and of nature's beauty, with the same broad comprehension of humanity, and the same exclusive devotion to his art. We see the tree grow until its branches reach far and wide, but its symmetrical form remains unaltered. To the end of his unexampled career he follows the same path, ever upward and onward, patiently, firmly, without haste and without rest. The joy of existence and the love of beauty for its own sake never desert him, and the Venuses which he painted when oppressed by the burden of a century have all

the voluptuous charm of those that he depicted in his lusty manhood. Who that looks upon the "Sleeping Antiope" of the Louvre or the "Venus and her Nymphs Equipping Cupid" of the Borghese Gallery, would imagine that they are the work of one who had already attained an age that few indeed have reached?

In the handling of the brush he was the greatest painter of all time. Others may be more inspired, but in brush-work he surpasses everyone. He can paint with the detail of Albert Dürer or the breadth of Velasquez, and seems to exhaust every possibility of his craft, tone, color, texture, perspective, *chiaroscuro*, drawing, composition. In particular qualities there are others who can surpass him; but no other brings to the technic of painting a proficiency so perfect and so varied. He is the most rounded and complete of painters, and therefore the hardest to describe. If a man has a phenomenally long nose or a monstrous head, we can strike off his portrait in a few words; but when he is faultless in his proportions, his accurate characterization becomes a matter of extreme difficulty.

The Venetians were always the most skilful painters of the Renaissance. Painting is color; and of color the Venetians were the supreme masters. Their merchants traded with the Levant, bringing back the gorgeous fabrics of the East. They beheld the splendor of the Orient, and transferred it to their city, adorning their buildings like the mosques and palaces of Cairo and Damascus. Beneath their feet was the emerald sea and above their heads the azure dome of heaven. The ocean mists were tinged with a thousand hues, while far away were the purple summits of the Alps. And who can tell what effect was produced upon their art by those gorgeous sunsets across the Lagunes that Aretino has described so well? What painter could look upon that pageant of gold and crimson without wishing to preserve it on his canvas? Hemmed in by his mountains clothed in the pale green of their olives, a Florentine rarely saw the perfect glory of a sunset; but the Venetian lived in an ever-changing pageant of color. It became to him the most essential part of life, the very substance of existing things. Every Venetian

painter was therefore a colorist, and of them all Titian is the most complete. Giorgione is sometimes more luminous, Bonifazio brighter, Tintoretto more startling, Veronese more stately, and if they could all be combined in one, Titian would be surpassed; but no one of them has such perfect mastery of color's varied resources. They are all limited in their range, while he is universal. And no one ever knew how to use color so appropriately. He understands what exact tints will enhance the effect of every picture. From the brilliant hues of his bacchanals, which recall the emerald islands of the sparkling Ægean, and the glorious splendor of his "Assumption," where heaven's own light seems streaming through its gates, to the darkness of his "Entombment" that so heightens the agony of the scene, he adapts his color to his subject with a skill that is all his own. And when we consider that these colors which we now admire so much have been dimmed and faded by the lapse of more than three centuries, we may well be amazed at the thought of what they must have been in their pristine glory.

Yet this result is produced by comparatively simple means. He was not a searcher after strange and recondite pigments. His palette was not peculiar, embracing only the hues within the reach of every painter, and he differed from others only in his patient industry and consummate skill, an industry so tireless that he worked upon his pictures for years, going over them again and again and altering them repeatedly, a skill so great that many have doubted whether it was oil that he employed, surmising that he possessed some vehicle known to himself alone—an idea that seems to be without foundation.

Color is perhaps the most enchanting element of beauty. The most perfect features cannot redeem a face if the complexion be bad, while a dazzling complexion will lend an alluring charm to lineaments the most irregular. So, too, color is the essence of life, as pallor is death's most striking ensign. It is therefore only to be expected that Titian should excel all other painters in depicting beauty, as he excels all save only Rubens, the mighty colorist of the North, in imparting a sense of vital-

ity. And while Rubens surpasses him in the intensity of vital energy, he falls far below in appreciation of life's dignity and grace.

It is the fashion in recent years to belittle Titian as a religious painter; but his are among the most splendid religious pictures that we possess. It is true that he treats them from a human standpoint, but was not Christ also a man, and were not his disciples men? The rock on which devotional painters split is the face of Christ. In trying to make it divine while preserving its meekness and humility they generally make it weak and unmanly. In the effort to do more than is in the power of art, they fall below what they might accomplish. Into this trap Titian never falls; and since the destruction of Leonardo's "Last Supper," which was also treated from a purely human standpoint, probably the finest head of Christ that we possess is in Titian's "Tribute Money." It is impossible to conceive a nobler face, or to imagine a loftier or gentler expression of reproach, or a finer contrast than is presented by the cunning Pharisee beside the exalted Christ.

And of all the glorious altar-pieces that Chris-

tian art has furnished, the most magnificent is the "Assumption." It provokes comparison with Raphael's "Transfiguration," and in this instance the palm must be awarded to Titian. It is a perfect composition, all centering in the stately figure of the Madonna, to whose face the eye is irresistibly drawn from every part of the canvas; while Raphael's is in reality two pictures in one, and the drama going on at the foot of the mountain is so much fuller of human interest than that upon the summit that the eye lingers there instead of soaring upward. It has been said that the figure of the Madonna is too matronly; but Titian is right, both in point of fact and in point of art. The Virgin was no longer young—she was the mother of a son who had died at the age of thirty-three, and she must have been fully as mature as she is represented. And if you doubt the correctness of his artistic judgment, imagine a slender, girlish figure in the centre of this vast composition and bearing all its weight. The balance and majesty of the picture would be destroyed. Then it is said that the Apostles below are too agitated.

Even in those days it was not an every-day affair for a person to be carried to heaven by exultant angels. The amazement of the Apostles was therefore natural; and when we consider that she who was thus snatched from their midst by the angelic host in a burst of light and song was one whom they loved and revered with an absolute devotion, their agitation is no greater than we should expect. When we consider the splendor of the color, the unity of the composition, the majesty of the Madonna, the strength of the Apostles, the beauty of the angels, particularly of the three exquisite young girls upon the right, it is difficult to name another altar-piece that can stand beside this. In particular features it may be excelled, but as a whole it is unsurpassable.

To value aright the greater part of Titian's religious pictures, such as the "Pesaro Madonna" and the "Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple," we must understand the religious feeling of Venice. The Venetian was as completely absorbed in his city as a Roman of the Republic. He lived for Venice alone, and scarcely had a separate existence. He

conceived religion not so much as a matter of personal worship as of state ceremonial. He was first a Venetian and then a Christian. Of the Italian cities Venice alone is personified by her citizens like Rome, seated upon her throne as mistress of the sea while the nations lay their tribute at her feet. The Venetian who looked upon her beauty saw in her the goddess of his idolatry, and her faith was his. From her grandeur he derived the idea of his stately and ceremonial religion, which in the hands of Titian is so noble and dignified, but which with Veronese is to degenerate into a splendid but worldly pageant.

And it was with this conception of religion as a state function that Titian painted. If we consider his pictures as something to take into our closet as a stimulus to personal devotion, we shall be much disappointed; but if we place ourselves in his point of view, we shall perceive that nothing could be worthier or more appropriate—that the grand solemnities of a state religion could not be more nobly rendered.

The sense of humanity which gives so much life and interest to his religious pictures makes

of him the greatest of portrait painters. In this line even Raphael, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Velasquez must yield the palm to him. The vital realism of his portraits is unsurpassed, and is combined with a sense of human dignity that gives them an unique distinction. How much of this dignity was in the subject and how much in the painter it is now impossible to determine. We should deem him a flatterer were it not that the three portraits where he had most interest to please, those of Paul III., Charles V., and Philip II., are so cruelly realistic. Paul appears as a gaunt, treacherous wolf, while it is difficult to believe that the protruding under-jaw and sickly physique of Charles and Philip were less attractive than they are represented. Of all his portraits these possess perhaps the least of his peculiar dignity, and we are forced to conclude that he only rendered nobly the qualities which his sitters in fact possessed.

The Venetian nobility were a superior race. Venice gave to her nobles wealth and power, but, as we have said, she exacted in return the exclusive consecration of their lives. To find

an equal absorption of the citizen in his city we must go back to Sparta or to Rome. The Venetian loved Venice with an intense devotion that made exile the worst of punishments, so that, like the young Foscari, he preferred to die at home beneath the torture rather than to be a wanderer in foreign lands. The life of the Venetian nobility was one of labor and danger, and they stood at all times ready to toil and bleed and die for Venice. Yet their intense patriotism involved no narrowness of view. Their commerce brought them into contact with all the nations of the earth, and they were continually sent on missions of war and peace to foreign capitals. In this busy life, with their minds full of lofty purposes and unalterable resolve, they acquired something of that calm, masterful dignity that made the ambassadors of Pyrrhus see in the Roman senate a council of the gods. Such men were Titian's friends and associates, and their proud, thoughtful faces he transferred to the canvas. His own genius enabled him to understand them, and their society helped him to attain their level. His portraits are therefore not

merely marvels of execution—they give us an enhanced appreciation of man's dignity and worth.

He is the painter of humanity. In the breadth and sanity of his conception of man and his environment he has no superior save Shakespeare, whom he resembles in many ways. He does not, like Raphael, idealize human nature and lift it to a higher plane. Like Shakespeare he accepts it as it is, but from the herd he chooses the noblest and fairest types. And he is the painter of the flesh. The mediæval notion that the flesh is hateful and unclean found no lodgment in his mind. He appreciated its beauty with the simplicity of a Greek, and had as much delight in its representation. The forms of his women are as rounded and voluptuous as art can make them, but as sane and wholesome as Grecian goddesses. He has all a Greek's joy in sensuous beauty, but he is always healthy and virile, never corrupt or coarse. Except in some cases where he is constrained by the necessities of portraiture, he gives to his nude Venuses something of the dignity of Venetian senators.

Venetian painting was allowed to develop along the lines of pure decoration, almost entirely unaffected by those classical influences that moulded the art of Florence. And this was a great good fortune. The Florentine school could not have been surpassed in its special qualities, and as it is we have two manifestations of artistic genius as different as if they had grown up in remote regions of alien race, the one the product of thought and study, the other as spontaneously beautiful as a flower. By their contrast each enhances the other's interest, and both are essential to the glorious harmony of the Renaissance.

Of all the arts painting was the one which on its revival was least affected by the art of antiquity. It was not until long afterward, when Pompeii and Herculaneum were uncovered, that men acquired any adequate conception of the style of painting practised among the ancients; and the influence of antique art on painting was indirect, working through the medium of sculpture. This is one reason why the painting of the Renaissance is so superior. It is spontaneous and original;

and particularly was this true in Venice. There were no remains of ancient statuary to be found in her lagunes, and she was too much occupied with war and commerce to import them. Her attention was directed not to the dead past, but to the living East and her perennial contest with the Turk. Yet in its spirit Venetian painting is far nearer to Greece than that of Florence. There was no conscious imitation, but the Venetians were imbued with the same sentiments—a respect for the dignity of man and a love for the beauty of nature. And of this revived spirit of antiquity, this new flowering of humanity, this unconscious neo-paganism, Titian is the supreme exponent.

The first to realize it fully was Giorgione, who revolutionized the art of Venice, so that all men had to follow in his footsteps or be forgotten. He was a fellow-pupil of Titian in Bellini's workshop, and they appear to have been born in the same year; but it seems to be universally conceded that it was Giorgione who invented the new style. He, however, did not advance beyond the idyl. He felt as no artist has ever felt the sweet poetry of nature, so

joyous and yet so near to melancholy, that we find in *Daphnis and Chloe* and in Theocritus; but he found that domain so charming that he sought no further. Titian adopted Giorgione's spirit and method, and in the "Sacred and Profane Love" and the "Three Ages of Man" presented them to perfection. But he was not content to remain there. He developed the new art in every direction, and applied it to the most varied and important themes. In his hands it gradually lost something of its poetry, but it gained immensely in dignity and breadth.

Her absorption in practical affairs also precluded Venice from becoming a literary centre, and preserved her art from the literary bias that is visible upon the mainland. The demands which she made upon the time and energies of her nobles were too great to allow them much leisure for literary pursuits. The love of fame which led the Italian princes to gather around them scholars and poets to perpetuate the memory of their exploits was forbidden by the jealous oligarchy which ruled in Venice, and which insisted sternly upon the

principle of equality among the governing class. Though on account of her freedom and her commercial advantages she had long been the centre of the book-trade, it was only when the Spanish Inquisition had rendered intellectual life throughout the Peninsula a thing of extremest danger that the humanists sought an asylum in Venice, where they found the same protection that England has afforded to the political refugees of later days. But they came only after Venice had formed her style of painting, and too late to produce a marked effect either upon its spirit or its practice. The Venetian princes had encouraged art only because it had served to decorate the city they loved so well. Hence the decorative element, not the illustrative, remained paramount in Venetian painting. Some, like Giorgione, never grasped at all the idea of illustration. Several of his pictures, which Herr Franz Wickhoff has demonstrated to have been intended as illustrations of classic authors, are so ineffectual as such that they have been always mistaken for charming but incomprehensible allegories.

So it was with Titian in his early days. The wonderfully beautiful picture in the Borghese collection of two women, one nude and the other richly draped, seated beside a fountain in which a Cupid is playing, has always been known by the absurd title of "Sacred and Profane Love," and has been considered a profound allegory, though none could say which was the sacred and which the profane. Now, however, the same eminent scholar has shown that it was painted to illustrate the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, and represents Venus persuading Medea to fly with Jason—that it is one of those subjects suggested to the painter by the scholars who had sought refuge in Venice, as was also perhaps the picture entitled the "Three Ages of Man."

This incapacity to conceive of art otherwise than as decoration, which remained with Giorgione till his death, was overcome by Titian, and the passages chosen from the *Erotes* of Philostratus and the *Epithalamium of Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus could not have been better rendered than they are in the "Worship

of Venus " and the " Bacchus and Ariadne," whose meaning is apparent at a glance.

Titian's progress in composition is conspicuous. At first he seems to have painted pictures mostly for the beauty of the individual figures; but later he displayed great skill in composing—a skill only surpassed by that of Raphael, and which he perhaps owed in some measure to his visit to Rome and his study of the latter's masterpieces. Still, even to the end he was uncertain in composition, often splendid, generally good, but sometimes strangely defective.

It has been said that he was no draughtsman, but the charge shows a misconception of his art. Drawing implies an insistence upon the outline, and the greatest draughtsmen are those who render the outline with the greatest power. Titian was not of these. His system implied the subordination of the outline. He rendered form by color, light and shade and atmosphere, as Nature does, and in his processes he was truer to Nature's methods than Michelangelo. The outline of his figures is rarely prominent, but the figures themselves

are admirably modelled, and in his " St. Peter Martyr " he displayed a power of drawing that Michelangelo himself might envy, together with a feeling for landscape of which the great Florentine was wholly destitute. That picture shows that if he had wished to be a draughtsman he could have ranked with the highest; but he preferred the domain of color, light, and air. Michelangelo was in Venice while it was being painted, and perhaps influenced its style. This, however, is doubtful, for the " Danae " that Titian painted in Rome is thoroughly Venetian.

In his work he generally preferred repose or quiet movement, but when he desired he could be agitated and dramatic. He understood that it is pleasantest to live with pictures of serene and tranquil beauty, but when the occasion demanded he was a master of vehement action and intense emotion.

He was not a great anatomist like Michelangelo. He did not love the body for its framework of bones and muscle, but for the beauty of its fleshly covering. And no one has rendered this so well. The female types

that he prefers are voluptuous and full, so that the muscles are rarely seen, and as they are fitted rather for repose than for action, he shows them seated or reclining, sometimes in princely palaces, sometimes upon the sward beneath overarching trees or beside the sea. He is the painter of woman's form, as Leonardo is the painter of her soul; and his women, so beautiful and so healthy, often with that hair of reddish gold that has acquired his name, stand among modern works where the Venus of Cnidus did among the ancient.

He is sensuous but never gross. He remains always an aristocrat to his finger-tips. Amongst the commonplace and vulgar types that cover the walls of our modern salons his women would reign as queens. He painted them for the great of the earth, for the princes and nobles with whom he associated, not for the vulgar populace.

And, indeed, no modern populace has sufficiently shaken off the Middle Ages properly to enjoy the nude. When certain men appeared naked before the Empress Livia, and her servants would have chastised them, she forbade

it, saying, "Let them alone; to a pure woman they are only statues." But to the modern populace statues are only naked men and women. In Titian's time, however, as with us to-day, many of the intelligent classes had passed beyond that stage, and for them he painted, producing works which, however different in their mode of treatment, would have delighted the companions of Pericles, and would have been hailed with universal acclamation by that beauty-loving people who assembled in multitudes to gaze upon the charms of Phryne or of Lais.

He was a master of many manners. He began with the idyllic style of Giorgione, in which is to be found the sweetest essence of bucolic poetry. But he passed on to the splendid realism of his portraits, the grand style of his "Assumption," the agony of his "Entombment," and the unspeakable torture of his "Mocking of Christ." No painter save only Raphael has covered so wide a field, or covered it so well.

But in one respect he was the very antithesis of Raphael. As if conscious that his life and

vigor were to be prolonged to an unexampled degree, he was in no haste, though he rested not, and his development was slow; while Raphael, as if aware that, like Achilles, his career was to be as brief as glorious, developed at the earliest moment, and crowded into his narrow span every possible activity.

Though his masterful repose was removed as far as possible from Byron's storm and stress, in two respects they were strikingly alike—they had a more intense and personal comprehension of woman's beauty than anyone else has had, and an unequalled feeling for nature, a sort of pantheistic sense of being a part of the inanimate world.

Titian was the first in modern times to paint a landscape. There were many fine landscapes before his day, and landscape-painting has achieved few greater triumphs than in his master Bellini's "Agony in the Garden," with that awful light in the east proclaiming the lurid dawning of the fatal day. But they were only backgrounds. Titian was the first to paint a landscape for itself alone. The landscape, too, is an important part of nearly all his

pictures, and it is as appropriate as his colors. It smiles with the joyous, it weeps with the sorrowing, it thunders with the wrathful. It is not, as with Raphael, nature dominated by man; it is man and nature as inseparable parts of a pantheistic whole, laughing, wailing, cursing together, and each answering to the other's mood. He, too, painted a great battle-piece, which has perished, and which we know only by engravings and his sketch. It is not so passionate as Leonardo's, nor so harmonious as Raphael's; but it differs from both in the insistence upon the landscape, and in the violent tempest by which Nature contributes to the tumult of the strife.

He was the first to understand the grandeur and the mystery of the mountains. To the ancients and to his contemporaries they were simply horrid and forbidding. He was born among them, and he loved them with a mountaineer's devotion to his home. But he knew how to use them for artistic purposes. He knew that the barren desolation of mountain regions soon wearies the eye, and that the true function of mountains in landscape-painting is

as a background to verdant and alluring scenes. As such they are supremely effective, lending grandeur and sublimity to a view which would otherwise be only pretty. Of all painters he uses mountains with the greatest felicity. In most of his pictures his native Dolomites, far away, as he saw them from Venice or the adjacent mainland, stand out blue in the distance, enveloping the landscape with a sense of mystery and awe. He was the greatest of landscape-painters until Claude Lorraine, and in breadth exceeded him, passing from the idyllic suavity of Giorgione's scenes to the desolate horror which forms the appropriate setting to St. Peter's death.

Like Raphael he is a painter to live with. He is not a striver after the unattainable, a wearier of the flesh, like Michelangelo. With him there is no strife between mind and body. Each is suited to the other, and repose and harmony result. He is the painter of man as a citizen of the world, of woman as a thing of beauty, all placed in a suitable environment. He is mundane and human, while Raphael soars above the earth, but he is equally serene,

and he lends to our mortal life a dignity and a beauty that we can never contemplate too often. He may not lift us up, but he gives us a keener and a fuller sense of the worthiness of terrestrial things.

CORREGGIO

(1494-1534)

CORREGGIO is a Greek of the Ionian Isles, the fit companion of Sappho, of Alcæus, of Anacreon, full of the joy of life, of the adoration of physical beauty, blithe as a skylark, lovely as the morning. The return to the pagan spirit is not with him the result of study and conscious effort, as with most of his contemporaries; he was born a pagan of the gladsome days when the forests were full of fauns and dryads, when a nymph lay hidden in every fountain, when the wilderness trembled with the sighs of the amorous Pan. How such a spirit survived the darkness and sorrow of the Middle Ages, its joy undimmed, its brightness untarnished, fresh as in the days when Apollo watched the flocks of Admetus on the Thessalian plains, is one of those problems of which there is no solution.

He is the painter of joy, of a dithyrambic ecstasy which, if it ever existed in this work-a-day world, has long since passed away. His family name, Allegri, means joyful, and he accepted it as descriptive, for he often signs himself *Lieto*, or *Lætus*, its Italian and Latin synonyms. In Italy there has never been the break of continuity between classic and modern times that exists in other lands, and perhaps Correggio was descended from some glad pagan of the ancient days whose jocund spirit won for him the title that was borne by his descendants. And Correggio almost makes us believe in the doctrine of metempsychosis. In an obscure little town scarcely to be found upon an ordinary map, and in the humble dwelling of a small merchant, he was born, the glorious reincarnation of the spirit of Grecian joy, which had been crushed beneath the iron heel of imperial Rome and entombed in mediæval darkness. And he comes forth from his long sleep with no stain of the past upon him, fresher, brighter, more buoyant than when he wandered with Sappho and Anacreon through Lesbos and Ionia. Everything with him is gladsome,

and even the Fates, whom other artists have conceived as gloomy, stern and old, he represents as youthful maidens spinning the shining webs of golden destinies.

It has been the fashion of late years to depreciate Correggio, but it is difficult to see why he should not be numbered with the greatest. It is true that his art bears the same relation to that of Raphael and Michelangelo that lyric poetry bears to the drama and the epic. But is the lyric essentially inferior? Is not the quivering, impassioned song, free in its movement as the air and beautiful as the sunset, one of the highest expressions of poetic genius? The Greeks, who were no mean judges, ranked Sappho's *Odes* with the *Iliad* of Homer, and he who loves beauty for its own sake must be drawn to Correggio with an irresistible attraction.

Beauty and joy are the essence of his art, beauty of a sweetly sensuous type, exultant, rapturous joy such as the modern world has never seen. His beings are not of the earth that we know, neither are they of heaven. Sometimes they are the fauns that basked in

the sunlight and frolicked in the shadows of Grecian woodlands, sometimes the Ariels who palpitate with ecstasy as they disport themselves in the blue empyrean.

His children and his boys are the loveliest that were ever painted, far exceeding poor sad humanity in their beauty as in their joy. His infants that frolic among the clouds or play at Madonnas' feet are thrilled with a rapture such as childhood never knew, and the happiness of his youths reaches the highest pitch of lyric transport. Even the jubilant gladness of Shelley's *Ode to the Skylark* gives no idea of their feelings.

It would be wrong to call his beings superhuman. They are fairer and happier than man can ever be, but they lack that tinge of sadness which purifies and elevates humanity at its best. They are spirits of the air that hover near to earth, playing in the sunbeams and wantoning with the roses, and they have never scaled those heights wrapped in storms and clouds which the soul of man can reach. Our own Shakespeare, whose immeasurable genius enabled him to comprehend not merely the

infinite complexities of humanity, but the unseen beings that people the air about us, alone has understood them, and in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* he brings them into view—Oberon, Ariel, and their rout, creatures of inexpressible grace and gladness, wanton yet innocent, knowing nothing of sorrow and incapable of guilt.

These are the types which give to Correggio's works their essential character. He can represent grief with infinite truth, and the sad, sweet face of the Madonna in his "Ecce Homo" of the National Gallery has been the model for all subsequent pictures of the Mater Dolorosa. But with him joy is contagious while sorrow is individual. His glad-some pictures are glad throughout, all his figures joining in the glorious pæon of rapturous delight; while his mournful works are so only in part. The pious wish that health might be contagious instead of disease finds its realization in his ideal world.

No other artist ever took so lofty a flight from so low an eminence. He was brought up in the insignificant Emilian town whose name

he bears, and it is not known that he ever had a competent teacher. He never visited Florence, Rome, or Venice. Morelli sees in his works traces of Francia's influence, but there is no proof that he was ever at Bologna, or that he ever beheld one of Francia's pictures. Traces of Mantegna's influence are apparent, and it is strongly believed that he must have studied at Mantua; but the genius of Mantegna, the severest of Renaissance masters, has so little in common with Correggio's that the influence could not have been great. It is suspected that he must have seen something by Leonardo and Raphael, but there is no certainty, perhaps no likelihood, of that. He is generally looked upon as an outgrowth from the school of Ferrara, but his gracious style has little in common with that of Tura, Costa, Grandi, or even Dosso. Of course he learned the rudiments of painting from someone. The mastery of technic results only from the labor of successive generations, and no one who begins at the beginning can accomplish much. But the vital elements of his style are all his own, and its originality is as striking as its beauty.

Perhaps his isolation was an advantage. With none about him of commensurate talents, his genius was left in unfettered freedom to develop along its own lines. Contact with men of equal force might have robbed him of a portion of his originality, taken away something of the lyric ecstasy of his works and left them more formal and academic. It is sad to think that one of the few supreme masters of art should have passed his life in obscurity, without the fellowship of the great men who could have understood his worth; but perhaps it is better as it is. Who can tell what effect the life of courts would have had on the exquisite poetry of his delicate nature?

Nor was the place of his birth so unpropitious as it would seem at first. The spirit of the Renaissance had permeated the whole of Northern Italy, and in every town and hamlet men talked of Plato and Apelles, often with insufficient knowledge, but always with unlimited enthusiasm. The little city of Correggio, now so drowsy, was then the centre of considerable intellectual activity. At no time have women been more cultivated or more

influential than during the Italian Renaissance, and in Correggio's day the petty court of his native town was presided over by Veronica Gambara, one of the most charming of her sex, a lover of art and literature and a poetess of decided merit. Existing documents show that Correggio must have been a welcome visitor at this court, and there, if he met no artists of the first distinction, he at least found painters who could teach him the rudiments of his craft, and he sucked in with every breath that love of classic beauty that was the very soul of the Renaissance. Even in that provincial town the opportunities for grasping the true spirit of artistic creation excelled those now offered by many a pretentious city. That spirit of youth which characterizes the Renaissance movement was stirring in the breast of everyone. Each felt that he had a message for his fellow men, and strove to utter it. Some sought to do so in words, others by the brush; and art, which owes its origin in some measure to the longing of the soul to escape its solitude and commune with its fellows, naturally received a tremendous impulse.

Living as they did at the centre of the world's thought and culture, where the most complex problems were agitating the minds of men, it was inevitable that the art of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo should be weighted with a deep significance. But probably the profoundest thought with which Correggio came in contact was the sweet, feminine poetry of Veronica Gambara, which cast no burden upon his mind. In art's great symphony the high, clear notes that thrill us in the pæon are as essential to the harmony as the echoing basses of the dirge or the mellow beauty of the middle chords, and it is well that Correggio was left to play them to the end.

From the time when Vasari and the Caracci proclaimed his merits to the world, he was the object of unqualified admiration until recent years, when there arose a school of critics, with Mr. Ruskin at their head, who loudly condemn him as immoral. They might as well inveigh against the morality of a skylark or a turtle-dove. The feelings which he expresses are joy and love, and if they are immoral, heaven must be a place of exceeding wickedness.

It is readily conceivable that persons who think that the function of art is to inculcate moral precepts should find nothing to attract them in his works; but it is amazing that intolerance in this age should be carried so far as Mr. Ruskin carries it when he brands as "lascivious" the Magdalen of the Holy Family called the "Day," who, fully draped, nestles against the shoulder of the Virgin, one of the sweetest incarnations of womanhood in all the range of art.

It is said that if his beings were alive they would be of no use. It is true that they would not be serviceable as plow-hands or as soldiers. But is beauty of no utility? Is not the flower that adorns the fields, which toils not, neither does it spin, as essential in the world's economy as the cabbage or the potato? Is the great singer who thrills the hearts of thousands to be condemned because she cannot toil upon the highway or fight in the ranks of battle? The love of beauty is one of the greatest influences in the refinement and elevation of humanity, and its contemplation is one of the few enjoyments that leave no sting behind.

It is true that his beings, were they alive, would be wrapped up in the joy of living and the ecstasy of light and air; but they would be as harmless as birds. And can as much be said of the prodigious figures of Michelangelo which are supposed to breathe so lofty a morality? Would the "David" care greatly who fell before his wrath? Would not the "Moses" in his immeasurable pride tread the innocent and the guilty indiscriminately under foot? And who can assure us that the mighty figures on the Medicean tombs, if they should rouse themselves, would not wish to plunge the world into a gloom as overwhelming as their own?

There is nothing immoral in joy, neither is love a sin. The early Christians believed that God was love, and as such He is portrayed in the catacombs, where the pictures are all cheerful, even joyous. But in the frightful night of the Middle Ages man's conception of God underwent a change. Judging Him by their own misery and suffering, they conceived Him as a being of implacable wrath and hate, delighting in His creatures' woes. Gladness and

beauty were accounted sinful, sighs and tears and the maceration of the flesh were alone supposed to find favor in the sight of God. That mediæval conception of Christianity, so different from the benign spirit of Him whose first miracle was wrought that nothing might mar the joy of a wedding festival, still persists in the hearts and minds of many; and to such, and to such alone, Correggio is immoral. Love is holy, and joy that is not purchased with another's pain is sweet and good. These are the worst sentiments that Correggio expresses, and he is no more open to the charge of immorality than the wanton flower that is kissed by the breeze. He may be called *unmoral*, but he is not *immoral*. His works simply have nothing to do with morality. He belongs to the class of those who are neither for heaven nor against it. He is content with depicting beauty in its most exquisite forms, with no suggestion of evil, and if others are seduced by it he is no more concerned than the youthful angels whose charms so tempted Mephistopheles at the burial of Faust. He is as innocent of offence as the children of Adam and Eve

playing unclothed among the thornless roses of Eden. He belongs to the age when men were naked and were not ashamed, and if we have eaten of the forbidden fruit, the fault is not with him. Raphael's beauty is of a kind that cannot be divorced from active goodness; Correggio's is neither good nor evil, but simply innocent and glad.

In his early works there is a marked religious feeling, though conceived in a sweet human way that would have startled and perhaps shocked the primitives. How much of this was heartfelt and how much the result of imitation we cannot say. Doubtless he received a religious training in his youth; but he was a faun from the Grecian woodland on whose soul the teachings of the church could make little impression, and year by year we see its influence weakening and the pagan joy of life and love of carnal beauty reasserting themselves more strongly. The greater number of his mythological pictures were painted in his last days, when he had abandoned the work in the Parma Cathedral in disgust, and had returned to his native town. And as his genius was

essentially pagan, the further he wanders from the ascetic spirit of mediæval Christianity the more striking and beautiful his works become. There was in him no revolt against mediæval devotion as in some of his contemporaries. It never had a firm hold upon him, and he merely slips away from it. He was like some lovely bird of paradise which we capture in the nest and seek to tame, but which when its wings are grown flies back to its glad life of freedom among the golden flowers of its native forest.

When at his maturity, his religious and his mythological subjects are treated in very much the same spirit. He humanizes religious feeling and spiritualizes sensual passion until there is no great difference between them. The St. John the Baptist of the "St. George" picture is a faun straight from the Grecian forests, and there was never a more charming representation of Cupid in his youthful prime than the St. Sebastian who looks on at the mystic marriage of St. Catherine in the Louvre. On the other hand there is nothing gross in the ecstasy of his "Danaë" or "Io." The joy of

love was never depicted with more realistic truth or more exquisite refinement. And the child angels that are strewn over the "Assumption" and "Ascension" like flowers upon a meadow, tumbling upon the clouds, or peeping out from between the legs of the Apostles, are conceived in exactly the same mood as the boys who attend "Diana" in the chase.

Like Michelangelo he is a painter purely of the imagination, though his visions are simple and joyous while Michelangelo's are complex and mournful; and like him he made no portraits, not even his own, so that we know not how he looked. His figures spring like Minerva from his creative brain, and have no prototypes on earth. They are superhuman in blitheness as in beauty, and yet so vivid is his imagination and so great his artistic power that they are projected upon the canvas or the wall with an intensity of realism that would do honor to the Dutch. Our reason tells us that such beings never existed in this sad world, but we sympathize with Guido, who always asked those who had seen the "Madonna with St. George" since he had seen it, if the chil-

dren were still in the picture, and if they had not grown up.

His name has become a synonym for light and shade. No Italian artist ever equalled him in that respect, and it is doubtful whether Rembrandt himself surpassed him, though their methods are so different that an intelligent comparison is hard to make. Like Rembrandt's, his shadows are not opaque, but luminous, suffused through and through with light, just as in nature—a thing so difficult of achievement that it has been accomplished in a satisfactory manner by few. None of his predecessors save Leonardo and Dosso had any considerable skill in *chiaroscuro*, yet Correggio in his earliest works reveals himself a master of the art, though a master who continually improves. It is incredible that so young a man should have conquered its complexities unaided, and we are driven to the conclusion that he must have seen some of Leonardo's works and perhaps studied under Dosso.

And as a result of his mastery of light and shade, his figures are bathed in atmosphere.

They are not standing in a vacuum like those of the primitives; the air circles round them, full of light, and they stand out in a luminous medium as in nature.

The Florentine masters usually practised both painting and sculpture, with the result that their sculpture is frequently pictorial, as in the case of Ghiberti, their painting always somewhat sculptural, standing out in bold relief, with strongly marked outlines. But Correggio and the Venetians are painters and nothing else, and the luminous, palpitating vitality of color finds its most perfect expression in their works.

As a colorist he must be numbered with the greatest. His color has not the glowing splendor of Venice, but in transparent lustre it is unexcelled. It has been well described as a clarification of Leonardo's.

It is very difficult to be a great colorist in fresco. The system is suited to works of monumental or primitive simplicity, and is not conducive to brilliancy, depth, or delicate gradations. It was rarely employed by the great masters of color, the Venetians. Titian

tried it at Padua, but without adding anything to his fame. Leonardo was so dissatisfied with it that he mixed his fresco paints with oil, and so destroyed them; while the colors of Michelangelo are so inconspicuous that they are scarcely thought of. Raphael himself seldom reached great eminence in frescoed color, though in some of his compositions, particularly the "Miracle of Bolsena," his success is undeniable. But it was reserved to Correggio to give to fresco the splendor and transparency of oil, and to produce with it those subtle effects of light and shade in pursuit of which Leonardo had sacrificed the durability of his most precious works.

In the painting of the delicate flesh of women and children even Titian and Veronese must own Correggio's pre-eminence. The finest piece of flesh painting in the world is probably his "Antiope" of the Louvre. The satiny sheen, the dainty tenderness, the rich, soft flesh-tints of a youthful nymph could not be better rendered. It seems living flesh, with the warm blood coursing through the veins as she lies there dreaming of love upon her mossy bank.

This picture of Correggio's and Titian's in the same gallery dealing with the same subject afford a rare opportunity of contrasting their styles, which have so much in common and yet are so diverse. Titian's gives an extended landscape, while Correggio's reveals only enough of the background to show that the scene takes place in the forest depths. Titian's Antiope is stronger, healthier, and lies in an attitude of graceful repose, full of dignity even as she sleeps. The posture of Correggio's is violently foreshortened, with the knees projecting straight toward the spectator, and her light slumbers are haunted by amorous dreams. But the greatest contrast is in the satyrs. Titian's is the perfect blending of the goat and man, exactly such a creature as would be produced by such a union. The goat's legs, the hairy body, and the low, sensual, cunning physiognomy are just what we should expect in a real satyr. Such a creature would be content with himself and assured of his own perfection. But the satyr of Correggio is a beautiful monster. There are the hairy legs of a genuine goat, but the head is one of the

most beautiful ever painted, as lovely as the "Eros" of Praxiteles, as the vision that appeared to Psyche when she lit the fatal lamp to gaze upon the sleeping Cupid. Such a creature would have died of mortification had he looked down at his hideous shanks. The expression of their faces, too, is widely different. Titian's satyr shows only the animal satisfaction of a bestial nature, while Correggio's is quivering with jubilant love. Yet it is not certain that Titian's is the juster rendering of the subject. If it were only a common satyr surprising a nymph, there could be no doubt of Titian's superiority; but when we remember that it was great Jove himself in this disguise, it is quite probable that Correggio's picture interprets more faithfully the true significance of the scene. Then we see divine beauty revealed in spite of its disguise, and the god, knowing that the travesty can be cast off at pleasure, is not ashamed of the ugly shanks and cloven hoofs. But the two pictures show well the difference between the realistic and human beauty of Titian and the ideal, supermundane beauty of Correggio.

From someone, doubtless Mantegna, Correggio early acquired a taste for the problems of foreshortening, and attained such a proficiency in it that he remained unrivalled until Michelangelo painted the "Last Judgment." And as with Michelangelo, his extraordinary skill led to its abuse, so that he sometimes painted figures merely to test his powers, placing them in violent postures where they seem attitudinizing and in points of view from which they appear contorted. Extreme power is always apt to be pushed to exaggeration, but in Correggio's behalf it must be said that Michelangelo in his later days departed further from the modesty of Nature than he has ever done.

In the handling of great masses Correggio has no superior. It would be vain to seek elsewhere for a composition so vast and so united as the "Assumption of the Madonna" that fills the dome of the Cathedral at Parma. It is not a complicated harmony; it is a thousand voices singing together a jubilant pæon of ecstatic joy. The Virgin rises into heaven in a quivering transport of triumphant exultation,

and all the apostles and the heavenly host join in a chorus of rapture that borders upon frenzy. For the first time save in his majestic frescoes in San Giovanni the architectural framework of the dome is disregarded, and we look straight upward into heaven. At the first glance the countless legs of the ascending angels seen through the billowy clouds of light produce a singular effect; but as we continue to gaze upon the prodigious sweep and whirl of the mighty throng the wonderful realism of the scene grows upon us, the world around is forgotten, and we seem to behold heaven in all its glory opened before our eyes. It is a bold experiment, one of those daring attempts which must find their justification in success. It fascinated his followers, who continually imitated it, but it remains alone as the one perfect achievement of its kind.

He loved most the beauty of women, youths, and children, but "The Apostles" of San Giovanni's dome are among the grandest types of manhood that art can offer. Perhaps the thing in which he was most deficient was in capacity to represent the withering effects of

age. Youth was his domain. He may give to his old men silver locks and flowing beards, but their eyes remain bright and their cheeks rounded, so that they do not really look old.

Correggio inspired in the breast of Toschi a devotion that has no parallel in the history of art, and the great engraver devoted his long life to reproducing the master's works. In this way we are able to enjoy portions of the frescoes which have been so injured by damp and dirt as to be invisible or incomprehensible from below. In the translation from the poetry of color to the engraving's prose there has been necessarily a change—no work can pass through another's hand and brain and remain unaltered. Something of the dithyrambic ecstasy of the originals has been lost, something of academic neatness has been added. Still the result is a triumph of the engraver's art and a boon for which the world must remain forever indebted.

One of the first duties of modern criticism was to relieve Correggio from responsibility for a multitude of unworthy pictures attributed to him by an uncritical age. Many of them were by feeble imitators like Parmigianino and An-

selmi, and had something of his manner, while others bore no resemblance to his work. They were simply clouds that obscured his fame, and now that they have been dispersed his star shines with a clearer lustre. Among them, however, was one whose loss we must all deplore, the famous "Reading Magdalen." Since Morelli called attention to the absence in it of the qualities of Correggio's style it has been abandoned by all authoritative critics save M. Müntz, and even he dares not be positive. It is apparently the work of a later age; but it is with reluctance that we give it up and confess that we do not know by whose hand the dainty marvel was wrought. It is a lovely little jewel taken from Correggio's crown—a jewel that never belonged there, but which he had worn so long that we regret to see it go.

He is perhaps the equal of Titian in depicting the beauty of woman; and in his style there is more of tenderness and refinement. He never degenerates into the insipid elegance of his imitators, but his female types are so exquisite that even the lovely patricians whom Titian delights to paint seem too voluptuous

and strong when placed beside them. Like Titian's, his Madonnas are only women, but women of such charming grace that they are almost worthy of adoration. And he has Leonardo's fondness for hair, and a nearly equal skill in representing its waving, fluffy lustre.

Like Michelangelo, he was one of the great factors in the decline of art. After his death countless imitators thought that they must paint laughing children and wriggling legs, with which they filled half the domes of Italy; but that was no fault of his. They carried his qualities to the same exaggeration to which Bernini carried the mannerisms of Michelangelo, but the irresistible impulse of weaklings to imitate the play of giants is as inevitable as it is unfortunate. Many a modest painter who might have been a worthy disciple of Francia or Perugino was ruined in his vain effort to follow Michelangelo and Correggio in their audacious flight.

He is the most emotional of painters. All his figures feel intensely. The sentiment which he usually prefers is joy, but sorrow,

when it is expressed at all, is expressed with the same vehemence. But his emotions are never complicated or difficult of apprehension. They are as simple as those of childhood, uttered with as little reserve, and weighted with as little thought.

He and Leonardo are the painters of smiles, but in what a different way ! Leonardo surprises the soul upon the lips—souls of wonderful depth and unspeakable complexity, and fixes them there forever as a riddle that no man can read. Sorrow and hope and joy, unutterable passions and unavowed desires are in that smile, while Correggio's have all the wanton happiness of childhood, only raised to a super-human pitch.

It is this want of depth that debars Correggio from the highest place. All other qualities of his art—beauty and color and light and shade, strength and movement and composition—are united in him as perhaps in no other; but he lacks Raphael's serene wisdom and the depth of those who have passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and drained the bitter cup. Joy is good, but he who has tasted only

its honeyed draught knows not the fulness of our mortal life; and Correggio's works lack that poignant fascination which an acquaintance with *Our Ladies of Sorrow* alone can give.

During the eighteenth century he was the most esteemed of painters. It was an age of super-refinement and elegance, when the nobility had become courtiers and passed their butterfly lives in exquisite enjoyments, scarcely conscious of the vast, hungry, suffering multitudes whose existence was to be revealed by the lurid flames of the French Revolution. To that polished and effeminate society the works of Correggio seemed the highest ideal of perfection. And even now as we stand before them, their fascination is so great that we can hardly restrain ourselves from concurring in this judgment.

We see in him a boldness of drawing and foreshortening worthy of Michelangelo, a genius for composition that Raphael alone can surpass, color not so glowing as Titian's, but of a marvellous lustre and transparency, a mastery of light and shade that only Rem-

brandt can rival, and a sweet joyousness that has never been seen on earth since the mighty voice was heard off Paxos proclaiming the death of Pan. While we look at him we cannot confess that another is his superior, and it is only when we have left him and our enthusiasm has had time to cool that a still, small voice whispers in our ears that, great as he is, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian are greater still.

BOTTICELLI

(1446-1510)

IT is very difficult to write impartially of Botticelli. Those whom he pleases at all are apt to love him to excess, and see in his works all possible and impossible perfections; while those who are not touched by his peculiar charm are disposed to look upon him as merely quaint and curious. The truth lies between these two extremes. He is not a great master like Raphael and Leonardo, but he has a singular and personal fascination that marks him as one apart, and gives him a niche in the temple of fame that is all his own. His works are like certain music that strikes a responsive chord only in particular hearts, but a chord that vibrates with an intense and special harmony. He who has caught its singular charm has a joy of his own forever, but he must not

blame his neighbor upon whose ear it jars. Every man who is not abnormal appreciates Raphael; but one has to be somewhat out of the ordinary to experience the full attraction of Botticelli's work. He speaks to an elect circle, whose members are prone to worship him with idolatrous devotion, and to regard as bores the profane who reject their idol.

No artist has had greater vicissitudes of fame. In his prime he was the favorite painter of the brilliant court of Lorenzo the Magnificent, but with the death of his illustrious patron he sank under the influence of Savonarola, so inimical to his genius, and in his old age he was eclipsed by the glories of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael. He was almost forgotten when at length he passed away in poverty and neglect, and he seemed consigned to hopeless oblivion when Mr. Ruskin and the English pre-Raphaelites proclaimed his greatness and made him the object of a cult that is extending every day. His pictures, little prized forty years ago, are now sought for with infinite eagerness, and are numbered among the most precious gems of the richest galleries.

Those who do not feel their charm regard this sudden fame as sentimental and factitious, born without reason and destined to a speedy decay; while his votaries wonder that his position among the highest should ever have been denied.

Both are wrong. He cannot be numbered with the supreme masters, but he gives a peculiar form of æsthetic pleasure that no one else can give, and now that we are awakened to its enjoyment, it is not likely that his works will ever again sink into oblivion.

In fact, he is especially the painter of our age, of an age that lives upon its nerves and is deficient in the placid strength of earlier days. He is the painter of the nerves, as Michelangelo is the painter of the muscles and Titian of the flesh. In all his pictures, pagan or religious, the type is nervous, quivering, restless, palpitating with feeling, incapable of repose. They are all neurotic; not to the point of disease, but beyond the limits of normal health. The women that he loves to paint are delicate hothouse flowers, rare orchids and sensitive plants that know not the sunlight and the rain. They are very lovely, and they have the tender

charm of those fragile beings whose heads are bowed with the weight of impending doom.

They are enchanting, but they are not beautiful. Their faces are irregular, often with high cheek-bones and hollow cheeks, and frequently their expression is one of poignant sadness. Yet perhaps it is wrong to deny them beauty. They do not conform to our standard, to the standard that has been bequeathed to us by Raphael's harmonious genius. But according to other standards they may be perfect. They are purely mediæval. If they had been produced in the depths of the Middle Ages men would have hailed them as a divine revelation, and would have considered them immeasurably finer than the master works of Greece. Every age has its own standards which it deems infallible, and the type created by Botticelli does not conform to our ideals. It belongs to another world more delicate, more exquisite, less healthy and practical than ours.

One reason of the high regard in which he is now held is the prevailing practice of studying art historically. No artist represents so perfectly a particular moment in history. He

stands at the exact point where the mediæval is aspiring toward the classical with infinite but ineffectual desire. In him the Middle Age stretches out its arms with unutterable yearning toward the goddess of Grecian beauty rising again resplendent from the sea, but she still eludes its grasp. He belongs to the time when men kept lamps burning before the bust of Plato as before the Virgin's shrine, yet failed to grasp the essence of Hellenic culture. In a little while the full day is to burst upon them, revealing shapes of classic purity that are to be preserved by Raphael's and by Titian's brush. But Botticelli's contemporaries are still in the early dawn, lit up by a dim and misty light through which the radiant forms of the Grecian goddesses look thin and pale. They scarcely see their shapes at all, but they know that they are there, and in trying to give them a corporeal form Botticelli recurs for models to the delicate, unhealthy types of mediæval beauty which he already knows; and it is as if some slender nun brought up in the shadow of the cloister should attempt to rise with Phryne from the sea.

In his work we are most powerfully attracted by this yearning of the Middle Age for the fair Grecian land—this love of the pine tree for the palm which it cannot see, but of whose beauty it has heard, and of which it has formed graceful misconceptions based upon a study of the ferns that grow about its feet. The most popular of his pictures are the “Birth of Venus” in the Uffizi and the “Spring” in the Florentine Academy. And they are justly so, for in them we see the very essence of Botticelli’s genius. They are among the most fascinating pictures ever painted. Their spirit is purely mediæval, but with what ineffable desire does it yearn toward the beautiful shores of Greece! And how unavailingly! In the “Parnassus” Raphael transports us to the Hellenic mountains; in the “Galatea” we float with him upon the sparkling waves of the blue *Ægean*. But Botticelli knows them not. In his search for Hellas he wanders far astray, and leads us to an enchanted land where the fairies dance upon flowers that their footsteps do not crush. He shows us Venus again, not as she landed in all the pride of her beauty

upon the shores of Cyprus, but as she emerged from the Venusberg, grown slender and pale in her long seclusion, with softly rounded limbs whose muscles have disappeared for want of use, and in whose eyes is the sad, wistful gaze that speaks of the infinite longing for the moonlit valleys and sun-kissed mountains of her native land that has grown up during the centuries of her northern exile. It is a world that has never existed save in the imagination of mediæval dreamers, a sweet fairyland of delicate and delicious fancies. In his works we see what the men of the early Renaissance imagined Greece to be, just as in his illustrations of Dante—so different from the pictures that we owe to Flaxman's classic genius or to the unbridled imagination of Doré—we probably have a much nearer approach to the visions that arose before the poet and his contemporaries than any that we can attain elsewhere. His works are precious documents that enable us to understand the workings of the human mind as words can never do, which reveal to us the Middle Age standing upon tiptoe and peering with unspeakable longing through the

morning's gilded mists toward the fair shapes that are dimly seen beyond the veil.

Historically Botticelli is of the first importance, and as an artist he has merits of a high order.

Though one of the worst anatomists, he is one of the greatest draughtsmen of the Renaissance. This may seem a contradiction in terms when applied to a painter who dealt so largely with the nude, yet it is true. The anatomy of his figures is usually wretched. There is every reason to believe that the poor diet, the imperfect sanitation, the want of cleanliness and the general misery of the Middle Ages had a most deleterious effect upon the human frame, and that the average man and woman of mediæval days was far from beautiful. In Botticelli's time but few of the masterpieces of antique art had been rescued from the clay. The Middle Age had looked upon the body as unclean, and had rarely represented it save in ghastly crucifixions; but with the revival of Greek learning came a new interest in the human figure, and men turned again to its representation. But they sought for models

among those about them, and sometimes with as little discrimination as Botticelli displayed in the selection of the "Mars" of the National Gallery or the youth dragged by the hair in the "Calumny" of the Uffizi, with their emaciated limbs; and doubtless a part of Botticelli's defective anatomy is due to the imperfections of his models. But Nature never made such shapes as some of those that he has drawn, and it is difficult to see how they could have held together if they had been created. Either he was ignorant of anatomy, or utterly indifferent to its requirements.

Yet he is one of the greatest masters of the single line that ever lived. He treats the human body simply as a pattern for a living arabesque. As a lineal decorator he stands supreme. In point of color he is perhaps the best of the Florentine school, sometimes bright, usually harmonious, nearly always charming. Yet he subordinates coloring so thoroughly to the line that his pictures have been described as tinted drawings. The tendency of color is usually toward the obliteration of the outline. With him it serves only to accentuate it. In

these days when it is the fashion to confound the distinction between the arts, his pictures may be described as symphonies of lines. And all of them are lines of grace. Such harmonious curves it would be difficult to find elsewhere. Frequently they are false to nature, an outrage upon the human anatomy, and to appreciate them we must forget how men are made, and look upon them merely as parts of an arabesque design. We shall then perceive that as lineal decorations they are endowed with a wonderful beauty.

Another merit which he possesses in an extraordinary degree is the presentation of movement. His figures are all in motion or ready to move. It is not a strong movement dependent upon muscular power, it is the light, quick, graceful movement whose seat is in the nerves. His walking figures nearly all rest lightly on the ball of the foot in a position that they could not retain for a moment. They are like instantaneous photographs taken when motion is at the highest point of its curve. And this motion is always graceful. However bad the figures may be in point of anatomy, they

always move with an exquisite rhythm. Indeed, the grace of their movements is enhanced by their very imperfection. When we see motion in a body of perfect outline, its grace is only what we expect, and our attention is attracted most by the plastic beauty of the form itself. But when we see these thin, ill-drawn bodies moving so gracefully, it strikes us with all the force of a surprise, and there being no plastic loveliness to charm the eye, we surrender ourselves entirely to the sense of grace. By making the forms attenuated and unattractive he gives us the very essence of movement. We feel that he would be delighted if he could express it entirely disembodied.

And this he almost does through the agency of the wind. He is the painter of the breeze. In his pictures it blows continually, sometimes quaintly represented as issuing from the wind-god's mouth, sometimes as only revealed in the flutter of garments—not the horrible *baroque* flutter with which Bernini has made us all familiar, but a flutter in which is expressed all the buoyant joy and vitality of the zephyr.

No one has ever depicted so faithfully or so daintily the effects of the breeze playing with a woman's vestments.

And what vestments they are! Sometimes heavy, sometimes light, sometimes mere gauzy draperies that only serve to enhance the rhythmic grace of the moving limbs, they fall or flutter in delightful folds, and are usually adorned with those delicious embroideries which were only produced in their perfection during the Middle Ages, when time was a matter of no importance, and when a handmaid would spend years in the beautifying of a garment as a monk would pass his life in the illumination of a missal. Embroideries so fanciful or so charming have never been depicted by the brush. And however classical the subject, if it is clothed at all, it is in these quaintly beautiful draperies of the Middle Ages undreamed of by the Greeks.

He was the painter of small groups and of single figures. In a large field he lost himself. His great frescoes in the Sistine Chapel are charming in many of their details, but the composition is confusing—a confusion height-

ened by the insertion into one picture of successive episodes of the same story, so that it is only with great labor that we can make out the meaning; and they can scarcely be said to have a general plan. He is like many writers who can tell a short story well, but who cannot handle the complicated threads of a long romance. Within his narrow limitations his composition is pleasing, but when he attempts it on too large a scale we see that he has overpassed his powers.

And he has surprising limitations. Though he spent his life in seeking after dainty types, his hands and feet are usually coarse, and the way in which he sometimes sought to indicate the fruitfulness of Nature is so gross and inartistic that it is inconceivable that so exquisite a painter should have committed such a blunder. It must be noted, too, that he was almost indifferent to light and shade at a time when Leonardo was displaying all its resources.

He was a great lover of flowers, and painted them, particularly roses, with exceeding skill. Usually they are true to nature, but there are some of them that have no prototypes now on

earth, and which were probably creations of his own delicious fancy. It has been suggested that his fondness for round pictures was due to his love of flowers, and that he borrowed the design of the "Crowned Madonna" from a full-blown rose.

From the Middle Ages he derived a fondness for allegory, and like a good many other allegories his own are not always clear. The one single exception is the recently discovered picture of "Pallas and the Centaur," and this was probably painted under the immediate direction of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and owes its comprehensibility to his shrewd and practical genius. No more delightful allegory than the "Spring" was ever painted, but its entire meaning can never be deciphered, and, indeed, it owes a part of its charm to that very fact. If we understood it fully it might lose in interest.*

He is the most feminine of all painters, and that is one reason why he so appeals to an age dominated by the female element. He paints

* It seems to have been intended to illustrate some lines of Lucretius, which, however, do not fully explain it.

men sometimes, but rarely with entire success, and as soon as possible he turns away to the presentation of woman's charm and grace. Vasari informs us that he loved to paint beautiful undraped women, but the iconoclastic frenzy of Savonarola, which has obliterated so many traces of the pagan spirit in the early Renaissance, has doubtless robbed us of most of these. Still the best remain—those which he executed for the Medici, who took no part in the mad orgy of destruction when so many priceless treasures were cast upon the bonfires in the Piazza della Signoria—and from them we can judge the type. We see that it was not woman's plastic beauty that he loved, but the alluring grace of her airy motion. Only once does he produce a form of exceeding loveliness—the new-born Venus that floats toward the shore in the pearly shell. And she is not classically beautiful. She has never known the free life of the mountains and the fields, her bosom has never throbbed with pagan joy, her limbs have never been strengthened by wholesome exercise. She has been brought up in the shadow of some dim cloister, wearied

by the droning of unceasing prayers, and now that she has escaped she feels no exultant rapture, and in her nakedness she is ashamed. The maiden upon the shore rushes with a richly embroidered mantle to clothe her nudity, and when she gets the robe she will fold it around her with all the modesty of a nun. As an attempt to represent the radiant goddess of pagan love, failure could scarcely be more complete; but it is full of the most delicate charm of womanhood. And so, too, are the maidens of the "Spring." Ill-drawn as they are, they are the very essence of dainty grace.

One reason that Botticelli is so attractive is that he falls so far short of what he attempts that much remains for the play of the imagination. He loves to tell a story, but he tells it imperfectly, leaving a great deal for fancy to supply. It is as if one should try to play the *Moonlight Sonata* on a flute. He would fail in the attempt, but he might draw forth sweet and haunting melodies that would never have been heard had he confined himself to music appropriate to his instrument.

His faces are as irregular in their outline as

his forms; but as in the figures it is the grace and not the shape that allures us, in the faces it is the expression. He is a painter of the soul of woman, not in its unsounded depths like Leonardo, but in its delicate refinement, its melancholy reveries, its sweet sadness, its wistful longings. If Leonardo's types may be compared to an Alpine lake whose smiling surface conceals unfathomed depths, his may be compared to a lovely brook that winds in sinuous curves, never very deep, but full of charming grace. Botticelli's women are not profound; but they are wholly womanly, with a tender, gentle melancholy that is the same in a Venus or a Madonna. He is not a very religious painter, nor of a powerful imagination. His realm is one of delicious fancy—perhaps the most refined and exquisite in all the range of art. In his yearning for Grecian days he wanders far from his purpose, and finds himself not in the classic land of Hellas, but in that region of mediæval paganism against which the church waged a war so unrelenting and so unavailing. It might crush mind and body, but at times the human soul would slip

its fetters and escape into the woodland peopled by elves and fairies and water-sprites, sweet, tender spirits whose joy was close akin to sorrow. In his search for the isles of Greece it was into this enchanted land of fancy that Botticelli strayed, while he thought that he was wandering through Grecian vales and by Castalian springs.

But though the thing that charms us most is the sight of this mediæval soul rambling through a pagan world of its own creation, he has produced two religious works that are among the most attractive of all time, the "Crowned Madonna" of the Uffizi and the "Nativity" in the National Gallery. The first, with its irregular mediæval faces that are yet so beautiful, so full of wistful melancholy, is one of the hardest to forget of all the pictures of the Virgin; while the latter, with its angels circling in the air as graceful as butterflies, is perhaps the daintiest in all of art's domain. Neither of them is great, but there are those who would rather surrender many a grand masterpiece than give up these delicious creations of a rare fancy; and their choice is not to be despised.

He is one of the most poetical of all painters, with a quaint, sweet poetry that we love sometimes beyond its merits, like some of the old lyrics of Elizabethan and Stuart days, so naïve, so touching, so full of delicate fancies and pleasing affectations, and possessed of a haunting rhythm and a delightful freshness that can never be forgotten. They, too, sing of Grecian gods with the same spirit of mediæval phantasy, striving with the same unsuccess to grasp the spirit of Ovid or Theocritus. The painters of his day were mostly realists, but Botticelli was a poet and a dreamer, living apart in a fairyland of his own creation.

There is no denying that there is something affected in many of his attitudes. It was an age of affectation, when poets delighted in fanciful conceits and far-fetched images, and Botticelli was not strong enough to escape its influence. The most poetical painter of his time, he had the faults as well as the qualities of the men who sang around him, and his poses sometimes overpass the limits of nature, and assume the affected airs of the pastoral verse that charmed his soul.

There are individuals whom we love beyond their deserts, whom we love with a full knowledge of their deficiencies, because of some peculiar attraction that emanates from their personality. Indeed, it is not usually the best and greatest whom we love the most. There is in all of us something of the spirit of the Athenian who was tired of hearing Aristides called the Just. And so it is that many turn willingly from Raphael's perfect sanity and beauty to the super-refined and morbid delicacy of Botticelli. Nor are they to be greatly blamed, for he can give them a peculiar pleasure like the love of some exquisite creature upon whose hectic cheek consumption has set its mark, and whose caresses derive a poignant sweetness from the sense of impending death.

Until our own day his influence has been slight. But since Mr. Ruskin rediscovered him he has been growing steadily in importance. It is difficult to understand how Burne-Jones could have existed had he never seen the "Madonna Incoronata," the "Spring" and the "Birth of Venus," or how Strudwick could have painted those wonderfully dainty and

gracious pictures of his had he never beheld the "Nativity." As the progenitor of these two masters Botticelli must be numbered with the blest; but he shines by no borrowed light, and few painters below the greatest are possessed of a charm so haunting when it has once been felt.

RUBENS

(1577-1640)

BORN one year after Titian's death, Rubens was the last and in some respects the most dazzling product of the Italian Renaissance. There are flowers which, when transplanted to a foreign soil, assume strange forms never seen before and take on a new and startling brilliancy. So it was with the flower of Renaissance culture when transplanted to the Belgian Netherlands. It lost its delicacy, its grace of form, its refinement of color, its subtle perfume; but it bloomed forth into something brighter, more gorgeous, and of a more startling splendor. At first glance it appears to have no affinity with the beautiful lily that grew tall and stately beside the Arno, gracious and lovely among the Umbrian mountains, luxuriant yet still refined beside the lagoons

of Venice; but on a careful scrutiny we discover that it is still the same.

If we imagine a number of wild Thracians coming to Athens to view the Pan-Athenaic procession and on their return attempting to enact it at one of the orgies of their bearded Bacchus, we shall have some idea of the transformation of Renaissance art when it passed from Raphael and Titian to its northern exile. The grace, the delicacy, the refinement are lost, but we have instead a wild, lusty strength, a primitive joy in animal existence, unprecedented since man replaced the fauns and satyrs that haunted the primeval woods.

The perfection of classic art is in its serenity and self-restraint, the subordination of the individual and characteristic to the ideal and universal. And yet, unrestrained and sometimes even grotesque as Rubens is, he is essentially a classicist. He was one of the most accomplished men of his time, speaking all the languages of Western Europe, familiar with Latin and Greek, and steeped to the lips in ancient literature, art, and archæology. That love for "the glory that was Greece and the

grandeur that was Rome," that spirit of humanism which so permeated the elect spirits of the Italian Renaissance, was Rubens' in fullest measure. At the banquets of Lorenzo de' Medici, with Politian, Ficino, Filelfo, and the rest, he would have been the guest of honor. In his conversation, so learned, so brilliant, so full of tact and refined courtesy, they would have recognized a kindred soul; and would have hailed him as one of the glories of the Renaissance.

But art is nature seen through a temperament, and no artist ever had a temperament so overmastering as that of Rubens. When he picked up the brush and sought to put upon the canvas (or rather the boards, for he usually painted on wood) those antique legends that he knew so well and loved so much, when he sought to translate to the eye those stories of the Greek and Latin poets with which he was so familiar, they suffered beneath his magic touch a wonderful sea-change. They remained things of rarest beauty, but instead of the chastened and refined beauty that had adorned them in their southern home, they

took on a florid and luxuriant beauty, a barbaric pomp and splendor, a lusty vitality that is wholly new.

Usually when he deals with classic subjects it is in his own manner. A great student of classic art, he yet understood that it must not be imitated, but used only as an inspiration. With his wonderful facility of execution he could no doubt have reproduced the masterpieces that he studied with absolute accuracy; but when he copies them he changes them to suit his own genius. With him classic scenes lose their calm majesty and are filled with tumult and fire. The tall, straight forms of ancient deities become overfull in their contours and their curves exaggerated. But that he can, if he sees fit, be perfectly classic in his outlines is attested by his wonderful "Tiberius and Agrippina" in the Liechtenstein Gallery, where a purity of drawing that is worthy of Greece is combined with a glory of color and an intense vitality peculiar to himself.

While so entirely individual in his method of presentation, he embodied, though with superhuman power, the thoughts and ideals of

his own day. No one, however powerful, can escape the spirit of the times in which he lives. Already art was invaded by the affectations, the baroque style, the fluttering draperies, the excessive curves, which a little later Bernini was to carry to so disastrous an excess. Rubens was permeated by all of these. Every fault of his contemporaries is found in his works: their stilted manner, their tedious allegories, their countless incongruities; but these, in passing through the wonderful alembic of Rubens' genius, undergo a transformation, and, ceasing to be lifeless affectations, become endowed with an unspeakable vitality. He utters with his brush all the thoughts of his own age, but he utters them with the voice of a giant, so that their petty babblings sound like the blast of a trumpet. The ideals which he embodies are the ideals of his own time; but he clothes them for eternity.

Even in his unbridled sensuousness he is a man of his age and country. The long, desolating religious wars were over in Belgium; the stern, unbending Protestants had fled to Holland, Germany, or England, and the population

that remained, weary of suffering, thought only of festivals and enjoyment. In this disposition they were encouraged by their rulers, who knew that happy people are never dangerous, and who sought by splendid pageants and worldly pleasures to divert the attention of their subjects from the strife-breeding questions of the day.

It was to this harmony with contemporary ideals that he owed his wonderful prosperity, a prosperity which Raphael alone has rivalled. They both stood as the perfect exponents of their respective ages, thinking the thoughts of their fellow-men, but giving to those thoughts forms of imperishable glory. Because they uttered the thoughts of their own time they were appreciated in their own day, and knew nothing of the penury and neglect that dog the footsteps of him who is either before or behind his age; and because they bodied forth those thoughts in everlasting types their fame can never die.

Rubens lived when allegory was the fashion. He was an elder contemporary of John Bunyan. He turns out one allegory after another,

sometimes fairly comprehensible, sometimes demanding a volume of explanations, and mingling real and mythological personages in a most bewildering manner. But while as allegories they are usually obscure enough, save those splendid works in which he so often tried to impress upon the strife-laden nations the contrast between the horrors of war and the blessings of peace, as pictures they are immensely successful, and we are content to gaze upon them for their own refulgent beauty, and never trouble ourselves to inquire what it is all about.

The coarseness and sensuality of the art of Rubens offends all sensitive souls; and yet it would be impossible to make any list of the world's half-dozen supreme masters that should not include his name. There is none who is absolutely greater, and few indeed can stand beside him. He does not, like Michelangelo, carry us to dizzy heights where the soul communes with the Deity face to face; he does not, like Raphael, lead us by Castalian springs where the Greek Muses and the Christian Graces move in loving converse; he does not,

like Titian, transport us to the Isle of Paphos, and show us Venus rising from the sea amid the glories of a summer sunset; he does not, like Leonardo, whisper to us the soul's unspoken secrets. He is of the earth earthy, intensely human, and with a humanity that aspires to no higher sphere.

In what, then, does his greatness consist?

In the first place, he exceeds all artists who have ever lived in the power of life. He is the Prometheus of art, causing the inanimate clay to thrill and pulsate with unexampled vitality. Of all figures that ever glowed upon the canvas or sprang from the chiselled rock, his are the most alive; so much alive that the men and women who pass before them seem dead or sleeping in their presence. Beneath his brush the flesh gleams and quivers, the blood surges like liquid fire, or rolls in turgid rivers. It is a purely animal life, but a life of an intensity unparalleled since Leviathan sported in the flood and Behemoth reared his shaggy mane.

From nothing in art or literature did Rubens borrow this vitality. The wildest orgies depicted on Grecian marbles, the scenes por-

trayed in the Fourth Book of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, are tame in comparison with those "banquets of the flesh" of the marvelous Fleming. Even that wonderful Battle of the Gods and Giants, that adorned the high altar at Pergamon is not so full of seething, passionate life.

This is Rubens' highest claim to immortality, the indestructible rock on which is reared the imperishable temple of his fame. The power to infuse life into inanimate objects is the power which brings man closest to the Deity. It is art's supremest triumph. And this Rubens possessed in an unexampled degree. He used it not with the serene wisdom of the gods, but abused it in the wantonness of human pride. From the shadowy void of formless things he brought forth not shapes of celestial grace, but strange beings, half satyr and half man, palpitating with a vehement, sensuous life at which Pan himself would have gazed in open-mouthed astonishment.

Such was Rubens when himself, Rubens painting for his own pleasure, uncontrolled by religious conventions or the necessities of

portraiture. But when the occasion demanded he could restrain this wild pagan spirit, and be most nobly human; and while such scenes have not the fierce, lusty life of his prodigious orgies, they are immensely vital, more alive than when treated by any other hand.

In the second place, he is the most brilliant colorist that ever lived. He seems to dip his brush in glowing, palpitating light; not the luminous gloom that encircles Rembrandt's ugly figures with an undying halo, but the dazzling brightness of a summer's noon.

It will not do to say that he is the greatest of all colorists. The Venetians surpassed him in depth and harmony. But in brilliancy he remains forever unapproached. In every gallery his pictures shine out like a lambent flame. As far as the eye can reach, before the figures can be detected, his works can be distinguished at a glance. The same colors that others use acquire on his palette a more penetrating brightness. They seem lit up by a radiance that somehow fails to fall upon the works that hang beside them. It is neither the pale gray light of the north through which objects loom

pallid and indistinct, nor the clear white light of southern climes; it is a splendid supermundane effulgence seen only in the painter's visions as he dreamed of that Italy which he loved so well, basking beneath Apollo's golden beams.

It is this supernatural brilliancy of color that makes Rubens' pictures the most incomprehensible of all to him who has studied them only in photographs and engravings. To such, Rubens seems simply coarse and inelegant, and the beholder wonders why this uncouth Fleming should be throned beside the mighty ones of Italy and Greece. But no one who has looked upon the original masterpieces long enough to recover from the first shock of their unbridled sensuality can doubt his right to be numbered with the greatest; and the more we look the more we love his splendor, and the paler and darker seem the works that hang beside him. Take, for example, the "Judgment of Paris" in the National Gallery or the "Perseus and Andromeda" at Berlin. Anyone studying these in black and white, and seeing only the coarse outlines and heavy

forms, would pronounce them ugly; while in fact the rich splendor of their coloring converts them into visions of eternal beauty.

The work of every artist is very apt to be affected by the prevailing atmospheric conditions of his country. Different men may devote their attention to differing objects, but they all see them through the same all-pervading medium. In a dry climate like Florence, where there is little atmospheric coloring, and every outline stands forth clear and distinct, the painter is apt to be primarily a draughtsman. In a moist climate like Venice, where in the shimmering mists outlines are frequently blurred, and where the sun rises and sets in a blaze of glory, the painter is apt to sacrifice outline to color. It is therefore not surprising that in the far mistier climate of the Netherlands Rubens was essentially a colorist. So much environment did for him; but it was his own supreme genius that made of him in that gray, dark land the most brilliant colorist that the world has ever seen, dipping his brush in tints so splendid that they seem to have been made for him alone.

In the third place, he is the greatest of all painters of the flesh. Even Titian is not his equal. With a few strokes of the brush, with an amazing economy of labor, he brings before us the living, palpitating flesh, with all its quivering vitality, its satiny sheen. The human flesh is the most difficult of all things to paint, and yet the most important, for nothing is more profoundly true than that saying of Pope's that "the proper study of mankind is man." Hence, he who can excel in that is entitled to be called the most skilful of the wielders of the brush.

Great discrimination is required in the study of Rubens' works. He was not merely an earnest and laborious painter, but, like Raphael, he was the presiding genius of an immense picture manufactory, where all manner of decorative commissions were undertaken. In practically all of his works, save those of his early days and a few painted in his latter years to glorify the voluptuous beauty of his second wife, the handiwork of his pupils is seen. For many pictures he furnished only a sketch, leaving to the assistants the entire work of

painting. In some he only touched up the flesh tints; in others he reserved to himself the principal figures, leaving the background and the accessories to meaner hands. But so characteristic is his touch, that we can rarely doubt where his work ends and where commences the labor even of the most skilful of his pupils; and he has fortunately left many documents stating accurately the extent of their participation, to confirm us in our deductions.

Nothing is more difficult to carry on than a picture factory like this. Artists are notorious for their delicately strung nerves, their sensitiveness to criticism, their vanity and their irritability; and it is almost impossible to induce them to work together in harmony and under the guidance of a common master. Only two men have had the tact and suavity to succeed entirely in such an enterprise, Raphael and Rubens, the two most charming personalities in all the history of art, combining the perfection of technical skill with the grace and polish of the most accomplished men of the world and the native urbanity of a heart of gold, so that all who knew them loved them.

Both have been severely criticized for the employment of their assistants, and most unjustly blamed. In this way they were enabled to multiply their production many times while keeping it essentially their own; and upon the great economic principle of the division of labor it would seem folly for the man who could paint the face of the Virgin or the flesh of the Magdalen as no one else could do, to waste his precious moments on draperies and furniture.

Moreover, in this way great schemes of decoration could be carried out with a unity of design and style that is now impossible. Look at any of our public buildings that have been adorned since the practice of collaboration has been abandoned. Each picture is the work of a single artist, and a unity in itself; but all the separate unities generally make a most discordant whole; and it is only on those rare occasions where an entire building is turned over to a single artist, as was sometimes the case with Baudry and Puvis de Chavannes, that a satisfactory result proceeds from so much labor.

Rubens' amazing and unexampled fecundity was not due altogether nor chiefly to the assistance of his pupils. He himself had an unequalled facility of production. His mastery of the brush was perfect; his ability to produce the desired effect with the greatest economy of labor has never been excelled. He had the true artist's eye, which seizes at once on the essential characteristics of things, and his wide reading and continual converse with learned men filled his mind with unlimited ideas to be transmuted into pictures. When you look at the orgies and revels which he delights to paint, you would expect to find a boon companion and a wassailer; but of all artists he was the most methodical and industrious. Between the man and his art there was a mighty gulf. His works are the most unrestrained in all art's wide domain, but in his life he was the model of manly virtue, living laborious days and passing his nights in the bosom of his family. Even in the painting of those impetuous canvases where it seems as if the artist, hurried onward by the fire of his imagination, had lost all self-control, he was never

for a moment carried away, but moved on with calm self-mastery, advancing the picture each day as much as time and circumstances would permit.

Like most men destined to a long life, Rubens was slow to develop, and he was well advanced in manhood before his style was formed. The pictures painted during his youth are numerous and they are entirely by his hand, but in the estimate of his genius they are scarcely to be considered—the real Rubens has not yet been born. During a long sojourn in Italy, on emerging from his master's studio he acquired the vicious method of Caravaggio, which was then the rage, with its high lights and black shadows, and it was many years before he shook it off. His life was one long progress toward the light. Each year the shadows grow less opaque, each year the passage from light to shadow is less abrupt, until gradually the shadows almost pass away, and the light shines forth with an effulgence without example.

Perhaps the period of his painting that appeals to the greater number is the middle one,

when he produced the "Descent from the Cross" at Antwerp and so many other noble masterpieces; but the works which are most attractive to the real lover of Rubens are those which he painted in his later years after his marriage to Helen Fourment.

At the age of fifty-three Rubens wedded this girl of sixteen. A wonderfully fair blonde, she was accounted the most beautiful woman in Flanders. She was the perfection of the type toward which the art of Rubens had been constantly tending. His love for her was unbounded, and henceforth his painting is but a song in praise of her voluptuous charms. Marvellous as had been his brush-work before, astonishing his skill as a painter of flesh, henceforth he surpasses himself. In everything he produced afterwards the satiny sheen of her plump, blond flesh is seen, painted with a caressing touch that only love could dictate, and with a perfect mastery that remains forever unapproachable.

And his indiscretions in the disclosure of her beauty are amazing even among painters. He has portrayed her in every stage of nudity,

from the absolutely undraped "Andromeda" of Berlin and "Venus of the Prado" to the far more suggestive half nudity of the "Shepherd and Shepherdess" at Munich and "La Pelisse" at Vienna. Of all these countless portrayals of her beauty the last is probably the best—probably the most perfect piece of flesh painting in all the world; and his own appreciation of it is shown in his keeping it by him while he lived, and leaving it to his wife as a legacy at his death.

Singularly pure in his life for his profession and his age, the imagination of Rubens had always been of a sensuous type; and as men of that description advance in years a warmer voluptuousness usually displays itself in their works; as, for example, in those of Titian. This was the case with Rubens, and after his marriage to Helen Fourment his art became a hymn in glorification of the beauty of the flesh. Rich and with an established fame, no longer annoyed with those embassies and political commissions into which he had been drawn because of his rare tact in dealing with princes, he was able to paint more for his own

pleasure; and it was apparently for the joy of the work itself that he produced that wonderful series of pictures of voluptuous beauty which have so aptly been called his "banquets of the flesh."

This had always been the most characteristic side of his art, the side on which he will remain forever unapproachable; but his marriage with Helen gave him the model that seemed perfect to his eyes and one which he could never weary of depicting; and so from that time this style remained uppermost. It was owing to his love for her that he brought to perfection that luminous type of the perfect blonde that has been the despair of all succeeding artists.

The morality of the art of Rubens has been much discussed. Some persons are shocked beyond measure at the grossness of his pictures; others equally pure find in them no offense. But it is rather a question of temperament than of morals. Those of a cold temperament find him shocking in the extreme, while they see nothing objectionable in many works which, though more refined, are

more immoral; while those of warmer blood discover in Rubens nothing to offend. Some, like Ruskin, go so far as to allow their prejudice against the morality of his works to blind them to his greatness as an artist; but these are few, and are not increasing.

These "banquets of the flesh," which to some are so objectionable, must remain Rubens' greatest masterpieces. In them he has the opportunity to display to perfection the three qualities in which he stands supreme: his superabundant vitality, his brilliant color, and his living flesh. But they are not all. He is one of the noblest of religious painters. So far as we know, he was sincerely religious. He began each day by hearing mass, and conformed to all the requirements of the Church. In this there may have been something of worldly policy in an age and country where safety could be found only in conformity to ecclesiastical demands; but Rubens was no hypocrite, and was doubtless a Christian, though one of liberal mind. That spirit of humanism that penetrated the Renaissance permitted a man to have a Christian soul and

a pagan art. Had he not been a Christian he could scarcely have brought his wanton imagination to render with so much nobility of feeling the scriptural story. In the gentler scenes from the Gospels the face of his Christs is usually rather commonplace; but in the great tragic moments he rises to the level of his subject, and the face, though wrung with pain, is noble and manly in the highest degree. It is human and not divine, but it is grandly human.

Of all these religious pictures the best known, and on the whole the finest, is the "Descent from the Cross" at Antwerp. It is a work worthy to stand beside Titian's "Assumption." The unity of the composition is perfect, every feeling and every emotion centering around the descending body of our Lord. Each movement is rhythmical yet grand, and while pity and sorrow are intense, they are not carried to the point of disfiguration. It is one of the great masterpieces in grandeur of style. The color is not yet so rich as the master afterwards attained nor the lights so skilfully handled; but as a noble,

dignified work of religious painting it has few rivals, and perhaps no superior.

There are many others by Rubens' brush that are fit for its illustrious companionship; such, for example, as the noble "Theodosius Refused Admittance to the Church," that adorns the gallery at Vienna; but there are also many others which he painted for religious pictures and which were gravely hung in sacred places that are really as much "banquets of the flesh" as those which he painted in praise of Helen Fourment's beauty. Yet who would wish them otherwise? Who would blot out those numerous Saint Sebastians, Magdalens, and Susannahs that are among art's greatest triumphs? The Magdalen in the picture of "Christ and the Four Penitents" at Munich, with her perfect blond beauty and her shoulders so white and smooth that beside them the richest satin would seem coarse, is alone worth a king's ransom.

Rubens was himself most abstemious for his time, but he took a strange delight in the representation of drunkenness. Silenus and his drunken rout repeatedly pass before us,

and even Hercules reels by, supported by fauns and satyrs whose intoxication is scarcely less complete. And it is with evident love that he paints all this. Sober himself, he delights to note in those around him the exhilaration and the imbecility of the winecup. And this was not so unreasonable in his day as it now appears. Drunkenness then brought no dishonor. It was the accompaniment and the crown of every banquet. The ancestors of his fellow-citizens had been the worshippers of the god Thor, whose proudest exploit had been that he had threatened to drink the ocean dry. Rubens in this, as in other things, accepted the ideas of his time, but clothed them in forms that have made them colossal and eternal.

Rubens was principally a painter of the human figure, but he excelled all contemporaries in every other branch. Usually the animals in his pictures were painted by Snyders or some other assistant; but when he turned his hand to them, even Snyders had to own himself surpassed. In his early days he paid little regard to landscape, usually having his backgrounds painted in by others; but in

his declining years, when he had retired to the country, he devoted some attention to the study of nature, and the landscapes that he painted go far beyond anything that had hitherto been produced in penetrating observation of natural phenomena, particularly of clouds, light, and atmosphere; while his vegetation has the same superabundant life and sap that characterize his men and animals.

He was too intensely original to devote himself greatly to portraiture. He abhorred the literal fact. Even when he set himself to copy a picture by a master whom he loved, as, for example, Mantegna's "Triumph of Julius Cæsar," it was never an accurate transcription, but a free version in his own exuberant language. Therefore his portraits are not numerous, and perhaps they are not absolutely true to fact; but they are full of palpitating life, and sometimes they are perfect in their style. What could be lovelier or more living than the charming portrait of the elder sister of Helen Fourment that hangs in the National Gallery, and is called "Le Chapeau de Poil," or that Jacqueline de Cordes that is one of the brightest

jewels in the gallery at Brussels? His portraits have not the aristocratic bearing that Van Dyck gave to all his sitters nor the intense realism of Velasquez; but they are wonderfully alive.

Yet it is easy to see that in painting them Rubens felt himself hampered, and that he worked unwillingly save when love guided the brush. He turns with evident delight to themes that leave to his imagination unfettered scope, and particularly to vast canvases which he could fill with exuberant forms of super-human power.

He was not a painter of miniatures. He loved broad surfaces over which his brush could sweep in unfettered boldness of design and execution. He preferred figures of natural size; and in the handling of large groups in strenuous action he has had few compeers. Sometimes, like Michelangelo in his "Last Judgment," he overreached himself, as in his "Fall of the Damned" and "Fall of the Rebel Angels," and in his two versions of the "Last Judgment" at Munich, crowding the scene to such an extent that pictorial

effect is lost; but usually he succeeds wonderfully, as in the marvellous "Boar Hunt" at Dresden and "Lion Hunt" at Munich; which, in the intensity of the passions, the vehemence of the action, and the impression of strenuous vitality, are worthy a place beside Leonardo's "Battle of the Standard," a part of which Rubens had copied, and which no doubt he had in mind when these masterpieces were produced.

Yet the man who painted these wonderful displays of rage and power has had no rival save Correggio in depicting the sweet innocence of babyhood. He loved children with all his soul, and delighted in their dimpled charms, their guileless mirth, and their bird-like prattle. His children are not superhumanly bright and soulful, youthful seraphs, like those of Correggio. But they are so plump, so healthy, so full of bubbling life, so thoroughly childlike that they are irresistible. Where will you find such a picture of babyhood as the "Christ and St. John with Two Infant Angels" in the gallery at Berlin? And he painted many others that are little, if at all, inferior.

As we have said, in the handling of large masses in movement or at rest, he has had few, if any, equals. However great the crowd, he possesses a wonderful faculty of binding it together so as to produce an effect of unity. The wealth of details rarely detracts from the unity of the effect. To crowd a picture with figures is nearly always a mistake. The assertion made by a distinguished artist that there was never a great picture with more than one figure is of course an exaggeration; but when they surpass a certain number they are rarely handled with success. As some generals can marshal a larger army than others, so Rubens could marshal a greater array of figures in more varied action than is usually possible. Again and again he presents us vast compositions, such as the "Rape of the Sabines," the "Massacre of the Innocents," the "Garden of Love," the "Kermesse," and the like, filled with many figures, each entirely individual and deserving of special study, yet all contributing to produce a single impression.

Though so different, Rubens reminds one of Michelangelo. In the mighty Florentine he

finds his only rival in vital force. In that respect those two giants stand upon an eminence which none other dares approach. The life that quivers in every muscle of Michelangelo's titans is gloomy and stern, full of inward strivings and of aspirations too lofty for this world. The life that surges in reddest blood through the overfed bodies of Rubens and glistens in their shining flesh is joyous, earthly, and sensual, and thrills with no supermundane desires; but it is equally intense. The one is the life of titans that would pile Pelion on Ossa to reach the heaven from which they are excluded; the other is what the life of the fauns, satyrs, and wood nymphs would have been had they grown up in a richer, fatter land, flowing with milk and honey, and where the gift of Bacchus hung from every bough.

He also resembles Michelangelo in his immense originality. No other artists are so original, none others owe so little to external suggestion. Michelangelo deals with strenuous muscles, Rubens with palpitating flesh. Michelangelo is above the weaknesses of earth; the art of Rubens is the apotheosis

of carnal appetites. Both are equally removed from the serene perfection of Raphael, both are abnormal, pressing their characteristic qualities far beyond the narrow bounds of nature. Their men and women are not humanity perfected; but humanity with special qualities developed to a superhuman degree. But in their way of looking at the world, in the character of the types which they evoke and the method of their presentation, Michelangelo and Rubens are both removed to an immeasurable distance from those who approach them closest.

They are alike also in that neither founded a school, and both were stumbling blocks in the way of those who followed. This is the inevitable consequence of supreme strength. Skill may be imitated, but strength is Nature's gift. And the sight of strength is demoralizing to the weak. They strive to imitate its play, but theatrical straining after effect is the only result. Both had many admirers, and Rubens had many pupils; but the true art of both was so intensely personal that it perished when they died.

Rubens is one of the broadest of all painters. In landscape, in the painting of animals, in humanity's boundless realm he was almost inexhaustible. There was only one limitation to his talent — he could not scale the loftiest heights. Man's highest spiritual nature was to him a sealed book. Ordinary emotions he could feel intensely; but he could not climb Sinai's riven summit with Michelangelo nor stand with Phidias in serene majesty upon Parnassus' brow. His place was in the valley where dwell the men of earth, or in the forest glades where Bacchus and his rout held their prodigious revels.

The spirit of the Renaissance will never die, but Rubens was its last great exemplar. Already the two great painters who were his younger contemporaries, Rembrandt and Velasquez, have wholly escaped its influence, looking upon the world with different eyes and from a different point of view. But as the dying day often flares up in a sunset glory that makes us almost forget its noontide splendor, so Rubens came to give to the dying Renaissance the one triumph that it lacked.

CLAUDE LORRAINE

(1600-1682)

LANDSCAPE artists, like all others, are divided into two great schools, the realists, who are content to reproduce with photographic accuracy the things they see, and the idealists, who strive to body forth their own conceptions. Of these, the latter are the higher type. For the realist only a clear eye, a cunning hand, and technical training are essential. The idealist worthy of the name must possess all these, and must have in addition that capacity to evoke forms of power and beauty from the shadowy void, that creative faculty, which brings man closest to the Deity.

The idealistic school has been discredited in the opinion of many by the incompetency so often manifested by its practitioners. Their minds teeming with images, they have sought

to give to their visions a local habitation and a name without first attaining the technical mastery essential for self-expression. They have sought to dance before they have learned to walk; and the result has been feeble, sometimes even grotesque. If we attempt to produce the ideal without an effectual hold of the real, we have vague, lifeless abstractions that may excite the wonder of the ignorant, but which cannot long command attention. But when both are combined, when a dream is clothed with a realism so intense that it seems as true as fact, as in the case of Dante's vision of Heaven and Hell, or when the hard actualities of life are bathed in an ideal atmosphere, as in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, we have a work that will survive the wearing of the ages.

The real is the first thing to be aimed at. We cannot write a poem until we have mastered the grammar; we cannot dance until we have learned to walk. But if we are content with grammatical exercises, we shall never produce literature; if we are content to walk, we shall know nothing of the poetry of motion. As the scholar learns a language not for the sake of

knowing it, but as a key to the treasures which it unlocks, so the idealist learns to reproduce the real by brush or chisel only as a means of giving tangible forms to the visions of beauty that float before his mind's eye.

It is the function of art to perfect nature. She is a wonderful enchantress, infinite in her variety, but never perfect in her workmanship. Of the thousands of leaves upon a tree, no two are alike, yet no one of them is the perfect type to which the others should conform. Of the millions of beautiful women that have adorned the earth, no two could be mistaken for one another on a careful comparison, yet not one is faultless. And so it is in landscape. There was never a scene so lovely that it could not be improved by the removal of some unsightly or discordant object, or the addition of something to enhance its beauty or sublimity. The painter who reproduces any view, however enchanting, with literal accuracy, has merely learned the technic of his craft. He is not a creative genius. To be such he must not only know the secrets of mixing and applying paint to board and canvas; he must have studied Nature with such

loving insight that he can enter into her workshop and comprehend her processes. He must not only be able to copy what she has done, but to create scenes that she might have created and as she would have made them. He should be able to use the prospect before him as the inspired sculptor uses the living model—merely as a source of suggestions and as a guide to truth. He should be able to look beyond the actual to the ideal, taking the real only as a firm foundation on which to plant the ladder of his dreams.

Thus it was with Claude Lorraine, who, in spite of all the attacks made upon him by smart critics, still remains the prince of landscape painters. Never did artist study nature with more loving care. His two biographers, Sandart and Baldinucci, tell us how he would wander forth into the Campagna before the dawn and remain until after nightfall, striving to fix upon his palette every gradation of light, every tint of the earth and sky, every atmospheric effect; how laboriously he would copy every tree and leaf and flower, every rock and mountain, the flowing brook and the rippling,

sun-kissed sea. Innumerable sketches remain to attest his industry and the keenness of his observation. These are no doubt but a small fragment of the whole; yet they demonstrate that he was no idle dreamer, but one of the most conscientious seekers after truth in all the range of art. They show, too, that he perceived many things that he did not put upon his canvas because they did not suit his purpose; things which critics have accused him of being too artificial to appreciate. They prove that had he desired it he could have been one of the most effective realists that ever lived. His *Liber Veritatis*, with its two hundred drawings of his finished pictures, is unhappily locked up at Chatsworth, the home of the Duke of Devonshire; but every important gallery in Europe possesses some of his sketches and drawings, the National Gallery an immense number; and these show a delicacy and precision that rank Claude among the great draughtsmen; nor is their beauty more remarkable than the variety of the observations that they record. But all this enormous mastery of detail he used only as steps to the ideal. He did not sit down be-

fore a landscape and copy it with literal fidelity. From the view before him he eliminated every discordant element and added what was needed to make it perfect; and he bathed it all in an atmosphere of celestial peace that Nature has never known and man has found only in his dreams of heaven. There results a scene like the "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca" in the Doria Gallery, such as Nature has never made, but which is true in every detail, and which she would have rejoiced to make had her mood been happier. To a dweller in a northern clime these pictures may seem unreal in the ideality of their beauty; but he who has wandered through the hills and valleys of Umbria with their sense of limitless space and their mountains blue in the distance, who has gazed from the battlements of her high-perched cities over the broad vales where all lies in unbroken repose touched with sweetest melancholy, to the far-off summits whose sun-kissed clouds seem heaven's own outworks, who has stood at a Mediterranean seaport and watched the setting sun fill the air with gold-dust and suffuse the sapphire sea with amethystine tints,—he can

understand that while the scene which Claude spreads out before us is nature perfected, it is still as true as it is enchanting.

In four aspects of landscape art Claude has never been surpassed, and rarely equalled: in beauty, in serene peacefulness, in the sense of space, in atmosphere and light.

The beauty of his landscapes none can deny. Everything that nature offers most alluring to the eye is to be found there; trees that are the perfection of symmetry and grace; crystalline brooks that murmur between their verdurous banks, now breaking into miniature waterfalls, now spreading out into lovely pools that reflect the glories of the earth and sky; distant mountains whose curves possess a truly feminine grace which yet detracts not from their sublimity; ancient ruins and classic buildings of pleasing architecture; the sunlit sea in all the charm of its hours of peace. And while he gives us all these in their most exquisite forms, he excludes all that is ugly, all that is out of keeping with the spirit of the scene. His pictures are true harmonies, such harmonies as have rarely been produced.

The realist says: "This is all very beautiful, but it is artificial. Nature makes nothing so perfect." To which Claude might reply: "Every tree, every mountain, every aspect of earth and sky, has been studied from Nature. Every part is true, and if I have brought together forms of grace and beauty that Nature scattered far apart, I have but discharged the function of the artist." And the traveller who will follow Claude over the rolling Campagna and the Alban and Sabine hills into Umbria's land of enchantment will see that Nature in her happiest moments can give us effects almost as symmetrical, almost as serenely beautiful, as any offered by Claude's magic brush. Pictures which to the dwellers in less favored countries seem too exquisite for reality are little more than the bare truth in that region of delight.

Besides, no one reproaches Phidias or the unknown sculptor of the Venus of Melos with having surpassed Nature in dealing with the human form. Their figures, though superhuman, are true to life. And so it is with Claude's landscapes. They are perfectly true to Nature, such scenes as she has made in

Italy, such as she might have made in other lands had her mood been happier. The fact that they are not transcripts of any particular view does not impair their truth, any more than the Venus of Melos suffers because she is not a literal reproduction of any model.

I have never understood the reproach so often directed against Claude of introducing into his pictures Roman ruins and classic architecture. Such things exist, and they are beautiful. They were constantly under his eye. Men travel thousands of miles to see them. Why, then, should not Claude use them to embellish his landscapes? They are as real as a peasant's hut. But somehow in these later days the idea has gotten abroad that only the ugly and the commonplace are real; that things of elegance and beauty lend an aspect of artificiality to a scene. Yet in fact the togaed Romans, the mailed knights of chivalry, and the silken courtiers of Watteau were just as real as the drunken boors of Teniers or the peasants of Millet, and the artist who represented them as they were was as true a realist. Nor was Claude's introduction of these ruins

and this beautiful architecture the result of pedantry. He was an unlearned, almost an illiterate man, who painted as a bird sings, from the fulness of an overflowing heart. He painted the things that were lovely in his eyes, and happily there are few to whom they are not a source of perennial delight. If Claude had had no successors, the charge of artificiality would probably never have been advanced; but unhappily he was followed by a horde of imitators, who, with no study of Nature, sought to paint scenes like his; and their lifeless productions have brought the whole school into disrepute.

In conveying a sense of peace Claude has never been equalled, and this makes him one of the greatest ethical forces in the domain of art. The old Greek virtue of serenity—one of the greatest of all virtues—has been sadly lacking in modern days. Instead, we have continual unrest, strivings for the unattainable, dissatisfaction with ourselves and with all about us. Claude takes us out of this nervous, irritable, work-a-day world, and transports us into a land of enchantment, where all is peace and

rest and serenest joy; where strife and sin have been forgotten; where the gladness of the morning, the delicious languor of a day in June, or the exquisite reveries of the sunset hour abide forever. When we are oppressed with toil and care; when love and hope seem mockeries and hate and pain and weariness the only realities, then let the troubled spirit turn to Claude and bathe in his immortal sunshine. There are few pictures that we so love to live with, that have so healing an effect upon the soul. The calm beauty of his landscapes descends upon us like a benediction. They take us out of ourselves, out of our sordid surroundings, away from the trivialities of our petty existence, and bear us off into a world of serene beauty, where struggle and sorrow are unknown or but a fading memory that enhances our sense of tranquil happiness. Of all man's dreams of heaven on earth, Claude's come nearest to perfection.

Nature is infinite in her manifestations, and some of her aspects appeal to one, some to another; but there are many of us for whom the finest quality in a landscape is the sense of

space, the uplifting of the soul into the infinite that it gives. In this respect Claude has never been equalled save by Turner in a few instances; and he produces his effects with the sureness of a consummate master, whose hand rarely fails.

If any man of clear vision will ask himself what was the supreme moment of his soul's expansion, what was the moment when he felt most like a god, when the trammels of the flesh seemed to fall away and the disembodied spirit to soar highest in the heavens, he will recall the instant when some far-reaching prospect was first opened to his gaze. He will think of the time when he first stood on Mount Royal above Montreal, upon Richmond Hill, on Perugia's battlements, or on some other eminence overlooking a limitless expanse. In the presence of such a view we forget that we are poor creatures crawling upon the earth. The soul takes unto itself the wings of the morning, and flies away over sea and land into the realm of the infinite.

The weakness of man's mind and of his vision is such that for him to feel the sense of

space the scene must have a distant boundary and there must be objects between on which the eye can rest. The most limitless of all views is up into the cloudless heavens, where the closest star is millions of miles away; but we wholly fail to grasp its import. So it is beside the sea. Its vastness so far exceeds our comprehension, the eye is so completely lost over the boundless expanse, that we have no realization of distance. But in the region around Rome, where Claude spent nearly the whole of his long life, everything combines to fill us with a sense of space. The gently rolling Campagna, dotted with ruins and studded with an occasional tree or dwelling, lures the eye on and on from point to point till at last it rests upon the far-off mountains. There are countless objects to arrest the gaze, and as our glance ranges from one to another ever farther away, the vista seems to stretch into infinity.

Claude had this view ever before his eyes, and its lesson sank into his soul as it has never sunk into the soul of any other artist. Nearly all of his pictures give us an unparalleled sense of space. The eye is led on from tree to river,

from river to hill, and from hill to distant mountain that suggests yet something beyond. The vanishing point seems removed to an unlimited distance; and in their presence we feel the same thrill, the same sense of the immediate presence of the infinite as when we have climbed some eminence that gives us a far-reaching view.

There are few artists who are so sure of their effects as Claude. Of course, being human, he failed at times; but the failures are so few that they can be ignored in the estimate of his achievement. He was not a rapid worker. He painted with so much care, he was so determined that every detail should be accurate, that with all his unflagging industry he turned out only from three to five pictures a year; but he was fortunately spared for so great a length of days that his total production amounted to some four hundred finished paintings, so that every considerable gallery in Europe can boast of something from his brush, while the homes of the English nobility and gentry are teeming with his works. And in all this vast output how few are the unworthy canvases! Nearly

every one of them gives us a glorious vision of peace and beauty, and arouses in us a perception of the infinity of space.

Landscape art has explored so many fields since Claude's day that it is hard now to realize that in his own time he was something of a revolutionist, making many advances upon the work of his predecessors. The chief of these was that he was the first to place the sun in the sky. In the predella of his "Adoration of the Kings," in the Florentine Academy, Gentile da Fabrino paints the sun; but he gives it the face of a man, and makes no effort to depict its real aspect. The same is true of all Claude's predecessors. Claude not only painted the rising and the setting sun, but he painted it so well that no one has since surpassed or even equalled him. Some of Turner's sunsets are said to have been originally more brilliant; but the pigments used were so defective that they have long since faded; and for the present generation Claude is still the painter who gives us the most perfect presentation of the sun's glory.

In light and atmosphere and the rendering of

the sky he also made an immense advance on anything that had been done before. Many atmospheric phenomena, many effects of light have been since presented by the brush that Claude either failed to observe or eliminated as unsuited to his purpose. But in the rendition of those effects which he chose to portray he is still the master. His landscapes are bathed in atmosphere; not the heavy moist atmosphere of the north of Europe, which envelops everything in mist and blurs all outlines, but the clear, luminous atmosphere of sunlit Italy, which leaves all clear and distinct and only serves to accentuate the distance.

And there are no pictures more thoroughly suffused with light. It permeates everywhere. It shimmers through the foliage, it laughs upon the surface of the rippling brook, it caresses the ruin in the foreground, it bathes the distant hill in splendor. But it is never obtrusive. As in nature, it is the all-pervading revealer of opaque objects, not a thing existing for itself. And Claude comprehended what so many realists have forgotten, that the light can fall as well upon the beautiful as upon the ugly, that it can

light up a temple or a palace as delightfully as a cottage. Claude realized, too, the limitations of pigment in dealing with light—a thing which the impressionists have yet to learn. Knowing that no paint could reproduce the clear brilliancy of sunlight, he did as a composer who transposes a harmony to a lower key—he did the best he could to represent the sun's brightness, and then brought down all the other lights in proportion, so as to preserve the harmony of effect. The impressionist, on the other hand, tries to paint the light precisely as it is. He can give us the exact tone of light in the shadows; but he cannot produce the brilliance of the sunlight, and so discord results. To any normal eye the light in Claude's pictures is more natural than in the productions of the *plein air* school. He reproduces Nature's harmony, though in a lower key; while they, with all their scientific accuracy of observation, give us a discord unknown to her.

Claude has been reproached for his inability to depict the violent aspects of nature. It is true that he was not able to render satisfactorily storms and darkness. For that matter, neither

was Raphael, whose efforts to portray the tragic are essentially failures. But this limitation of Raphael's genius does not prevent his being acknowledged as the Prince of Painters, and it is hard to perceive why a different rule should be applied to Claude. He does supremely well what he undertakes to do ; and that is all that can be demanded of any artist. You might as well condemn Raphael because he could not paint like Michelangelo, or Michelangelo because he could not paint like Titian. Every one has his limitations, and the question is whether he achieves a high degree of perfection within those limits.

In devoting himself to the smiling aspects of Nature Claude was true to the traditions of his Italian home. The Italian loves light and abhors darkness. The dim, shadowy aisles of a Gothic cathedral have no charm for him. He enjoys buildings in which the noon's whitest radiance falls upon the splendor of fresco and gilding. He delights in days when the air is of crystalline brilliancy and when every object appears most clearly defined. He may be sorrowful, but the brooding melancholy of the

North has no hold upon him. His bright nature turns from the mournful haze that sometimes envelops his land to the sun's effulgence. He sees many aspects of nature, but only one charms his soul, only one does he seek to perpetuate on the canvas. At least, so it was in the days of the Renaissance, when his own character was suffered to develop naturally, unaffected by those influences that now invade him from beyond the Alps. Living much in the open air, his eyesight was generally good, so that on the clear days that he loved he saw distant objects with great distinctness.

Not only is the Italian's sunny nature averse to mists and dampness, but they bring to him serious physical discomfort. The Hollander in his cosy little room beside a cheerful fire likes to look out on fogs and clouds. The sight of them only adds to his satisfaction, making his home seem sweeter and more attractive by contrast. From his immaculate windows with their well polished panes he gazes on the shifting vapors, and loves to study the play of light through and upon them and the ever varied atmospheric effects which they produce. But with the Ital-

ian all is different. His great bare rooms with their lofty vaulted ceilings are rarely heated save by the sun. When the day is bright they are beautiful and stately beyond all other dwellings; but in damp weather they are cheerless to the last degree. Pictures of mist and rain are therefore associated in the Italian's mind with all that is cold and chill and wretched. In such weather there may be beauty, but he is too uncomfortable to observe it; and the accompanying sensations are so unpleasant that he does not wish them recalled to his memory.

Therefore, in the painting of the Italian Renaissance you must not look for storms and darkness. The dampness that makes such phenomena possible was hateful to the painter's sight. Sunlight alone he loves, and sun-bathed landscapes are all that he cares to depict. In the Italian mind there is little of that haziness, of that dreamy vagueness so common with the Teuton. What he sees at all he sees clearly, and so it pleases him to portray it. Accordingly he delights to paint his landscapes only as they appear in sunny weather, and especially as they appear when a storm has cleared the atmosphere

and when its crystalline purity interposes no veil between him and the object of his regard.

In his taste for landscape, as in so many other things, the Renaissance Italian was the heir of imperial Rome. To what extent this was unconscious, a manifestation of an inherited disposition, and to what extent it was due to cultivation at a time when almost all works of literary merit were in the Latin tongue, we cannot say. But certain it is that he loved precisely those views that would have pleased the subjects of Trajan or Augustus. The ancients delighted only in nature's smiling aspects. They saw nothing to attract in rugged mountains or barren rocks. Such things filled them with horror. They loved broad meadows sloping to an azure sea, gentle eminences clothed in verdure and bathed in sunlight, seaports guarded by graceful promontories and dotted with islands like jewels on ocean's bosom. It was such prospects that they celebrated in their poems and romances ; with such did they decorate their walls. The sublimity of desolate mountain fastnesses, of fathomless gorges, of storms and darkness brooding over waters that

moan and shriek in fury and despair, were to them unsympathetic and forbidding. Lord Byron's exultation in the grandeur of the storm-swept Alps they would have found incomprehensible. They loved mountains, but only when their desolation was concealed by distance, and when, blue on the horizon's verge, they seemed the fitting home of the immortal gods. They knew nothing of that desire to scale them, to climb their riven and blasted sides with infinite toil and no little danger, of the intoxication of standing upon their dizzy summits, that thrills our breasts to-day. They knew nothing of our restless aspirations toward the infinite. They thought that this world was all in all, and that the gods dwelt just above their heads on Ida and Olympus, and were content.

The man of the Renaissance knew no more of the universe than the ancient Roman, and he looked at Nature with much the same eyes. He loved her smiles and dreaded her frowns in the same way, and was equally inclined to represent only her pleasing features. It was they alone on which he could look with satisfaction ;

it was they alone that he desired to remember. Therefore it was they alone that he willingly fixed upon the canvas.

Claude is reproached with the poor drawing of his figures. The reproach is just. In dealing with the human form he was hopelessly incompetent. It is almost inconceivable that one who could represent inanimate nature with such perfect accuracy should have failed so completely in his figure painting. Nor was it due to a want of application. He was continually drawing from the antique and from life, striving with all his might to learn the secrets of the human body, yet all in vain. He realized his own deficiencies, and used to say that he sold his landscapes and threw in the figures. When he had attained such eminence as to admit the hiring of assistants, he usually employed some one to put the figures in according to his scheme.

It is generally said that Claude derives the basis of his art from Titian and the great Venetians and from the Bolognese. That may be so, but I fail to perceive it. Titian and his followers are in some aspects more modern than Claude. They possess in only moderate

degree his sense of space and his serenity. They are deeper and richer in color. The Bolognese, on the other hand, are so inferior to Claude in artistic worth that they are not to be mentioned in the same breath.

To find Claude's real predecessors we must go back to the old Umbrian school, especially to Perugino, to Pinturicchio, to the youthful Raphael before he fell under the spell of Michelangelo. It is only of late that we have begun to realize how great were these men as landscape painters. They relegated their landscapes to the background, so that the casual observer neglected them for the figures. As they were not presentations of any known view, it was the fashion to speak of them slightly as "conventional." Now, however, we perceive that these old Umbrian backgrounds are among the glories of art, often far more precious than the saints and Madonnas that are the centre of the pictures. These scenes, like Claude's, are ideal. The artist has not copied any one fragment of nature. He has composed a work of the imagination, true to nature's spirit, but his own beautiful creation. And there is the same

sense of peace, of infinite distance, the same exclusive predilection for scenes of tranquil beauty, the same unobtrusive color, the same preference for form and line as means of expression.

We do not know that Claude ever saw these pictures, far less that he consciously studied them. It is likely that the resemblance is due entirely to the fact that they lived in similar environments, in constant contemplation of the same charming scenes, beneath the same luminous sky. Certain it is that Claude takes up the work where Perugino and Raphael leave it off, and carries it along their lines to an ultimate perfection.

It must be noted that not only was Claude a great painter, but he was a great etcher. Only at two short and distant periods of his life did he take up the needle; and for want of practice his work in that line is very unequal. But at his best it is very beautiful, remarkable for the clearness and delicacy that characterize his drawings. Some of his skies are the best ever made with the burin.

Of late years Claude's fame has suffered an

eclipse. On the Continent the methods of the Impressionists are the precise antithesis of his, and they and all their followers have been constrained to ridicule him and to cry him down. In England, Turner, who owed him so great a debt and who sometimes imitated him so closely, would suffer no rival near his throne, and insisted upon abuse of Claude as a passport to his favor. Claude's pictures have all the qualities called for by the artistic principles that Ruskin laid down, the accuracy of detail, the idealism, the ethical quality; and one would have expected him to be enthusiastic in their praise. But such was his devotion to Turner that he voiced all the jealousy and prejudice of the master, and his amazing eloquence is continually used in abuse of Claude. Rarely does he bestow a word of praise on Turner without flinging a stone at his great predecessor.

If, as many critics believe, composition is the highest faculty of the artist, Claude must be ranked supremely high. His pictures hang together in a faultless way. Everything harmonizes, and the wealth of detail, instead of distracting attention, unites to produce the

effect intended. Raphael is called the Prince of Painters, largely because his composition is so rarely at fault. The same rule should be applied to Claude. He is one of the great composers. And now, as the influence of Ruskin wanes and the world is growing weary of the aberrations of the Impressionists, it is turning back to Claude, where he still sits enthroned in an enchanted land of his own creation, a land where all is harmony, where peace and joy reign undisturbed, and sin and sorrow dare not enter.

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